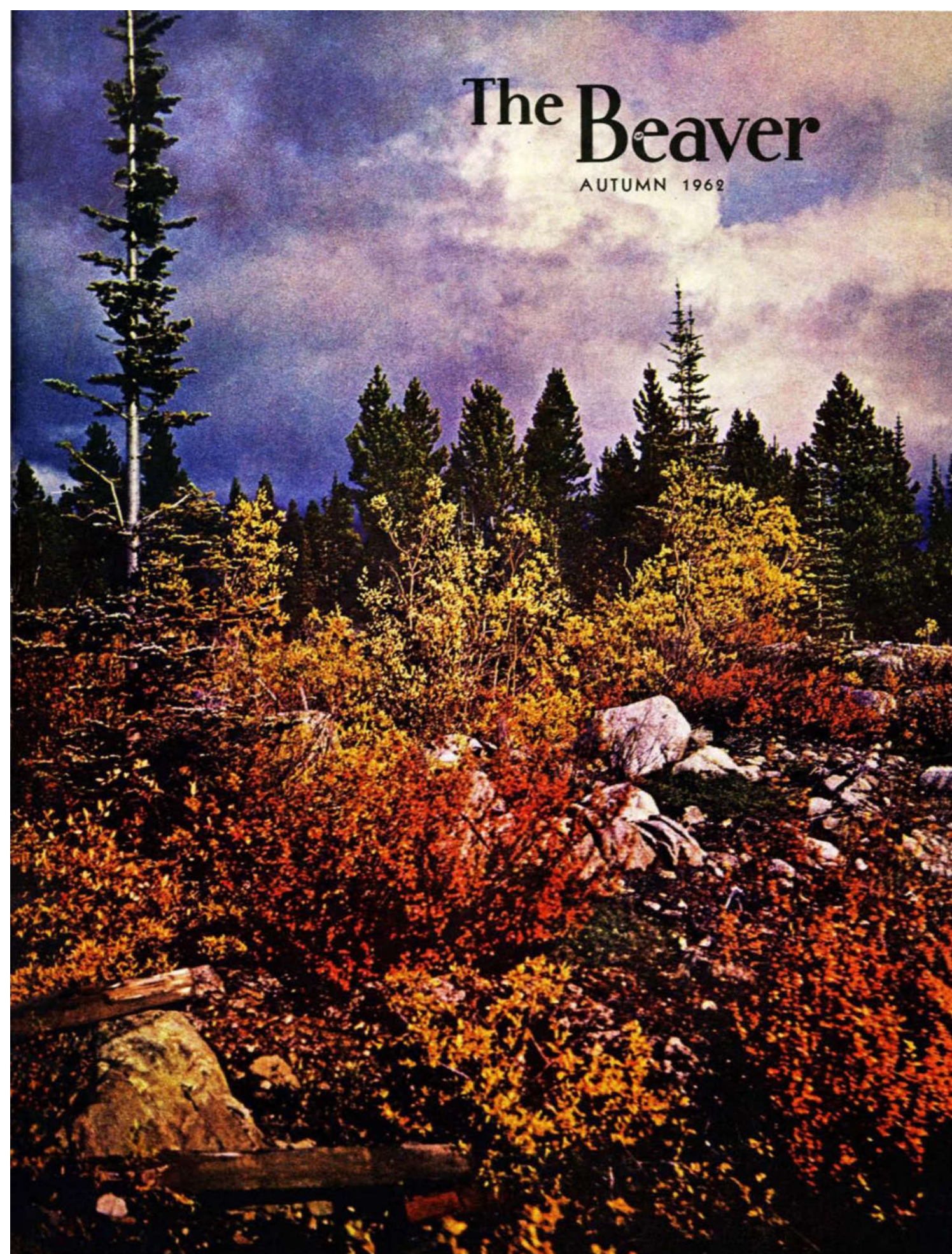


# The Beaver

AUTUMN 1962



36

From the  
Narrative of a  
Second Voyage  
in Search of a  
Northwest Passage  
and of a  
Residence in the  
Arctic Regions  
during the years  
1829, 1830, 1831,  
1832, 1833. By  
Sir John Ross, R.N.



# Arctic Journal



We did not observe any propensity to falsehood, or disposition to deceive; and, on every occasion, there seemed a desire to communicate all the information in their power, while, as far as we examined, this also proved correct. It was on the same principle, that we could always trust their promises; there was the "point of honour" engaged; and on the only occasion on which they broke one, in not keeping an appointment as guides, they long after accused themselves of "being very bad" for not giving notice; though, to have done so, would have been to lose a day of their hunting when they were without provisions.



**Hudson's Bay Company.**

INCORPORATED 2<sup>ND</sup> MAY 1670.

AUTUMN 1962  
OUTFIT 293  
\$2 A YEAR

# The Beaver

MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

Editor: Malvina Bolus



Mortuary figure from the old graveyard at Cape Mudge (see p. 39) now in Campbell River Historical Museum, to which it was presented by the owner, John Dick, with the consent of the Cape Mudge Council.

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Colour photograph by Rosemary Gilliat

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BY ARTHUR L. DISHER

*Captain Disher is a Regular Army officer serving with the Royal Canadian Dragoons, at present employed in the Historical Section at Army Headquarters in Ottawa*

*Photographs are from Lt-Col C. C. Kruger Collection, The Globe, National Defence, Public Archives of Canada, and V.O.N.*



# THE YUKON FIELD FORCE

AT precisely eleven o'clock on the morning of the sixth of May 1898 the large oak doors of the Ottawa Drill Hall swung open—and a column of regular soldiers, led by the band of the Governor General's Foot Guards in full dress marched out into the bright sunshine of a fine spring day.

On the small rise of ground, overlooking the line of march to the railway station, a small boy touched his

father's hand. "Are the soldiers going away to war, Father?" he asked. "No, son—they're off to the Yukon to help the Mounties," said the man. And that is about all there was to it; for the troops themselves knew little more of the task for which they had been selected, and still less of the journey that lay before them. A few moments earlier they had been addressed in the most general terms by His Excellency, the Earl of Aberdeen, Governor General of Canada. They had been praised for their appearance; assured of their country's support; reminded of the outstanding qualities of their officers; and had received blessings and good wishes from the highest sources; but they were left in ignorance of their purpose and of what lay ahead. Perhaps it was just as well.

When the column entered the station the band formed up along the nearest wall. The Foot Guards were not going anywhere—their only purpose was to send off in style some 190 members of the Permanent Force led by Lieutenant-Colonel T. D. B. Evans, a veteran officer of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, with a staff of four officers. There were three officers and 46 gunners of the Royal Canadian Artillery and three officers and 130 men of the Royal Regiment of Canadian Infantry. All ranks were superbly trained—fresh from the barrack squares of Fredericton, New Brunswick, St. Jean, Quebec, and from Kingston and London, Ontario. Their scarlet

*Lt-Col T. D. B. Evans,  
commanding officer of the Force*



*Faith Fenton in the Yukon, in the brown duck outfit and mosquito net worn by the nurses and herself*



*The Nurses who took the Klondike trail with the YFF: Georgia Powell, Miss Scott, Miss Hanna, Miss Payson; and Faith Fenton the "Globe" correspondent.*



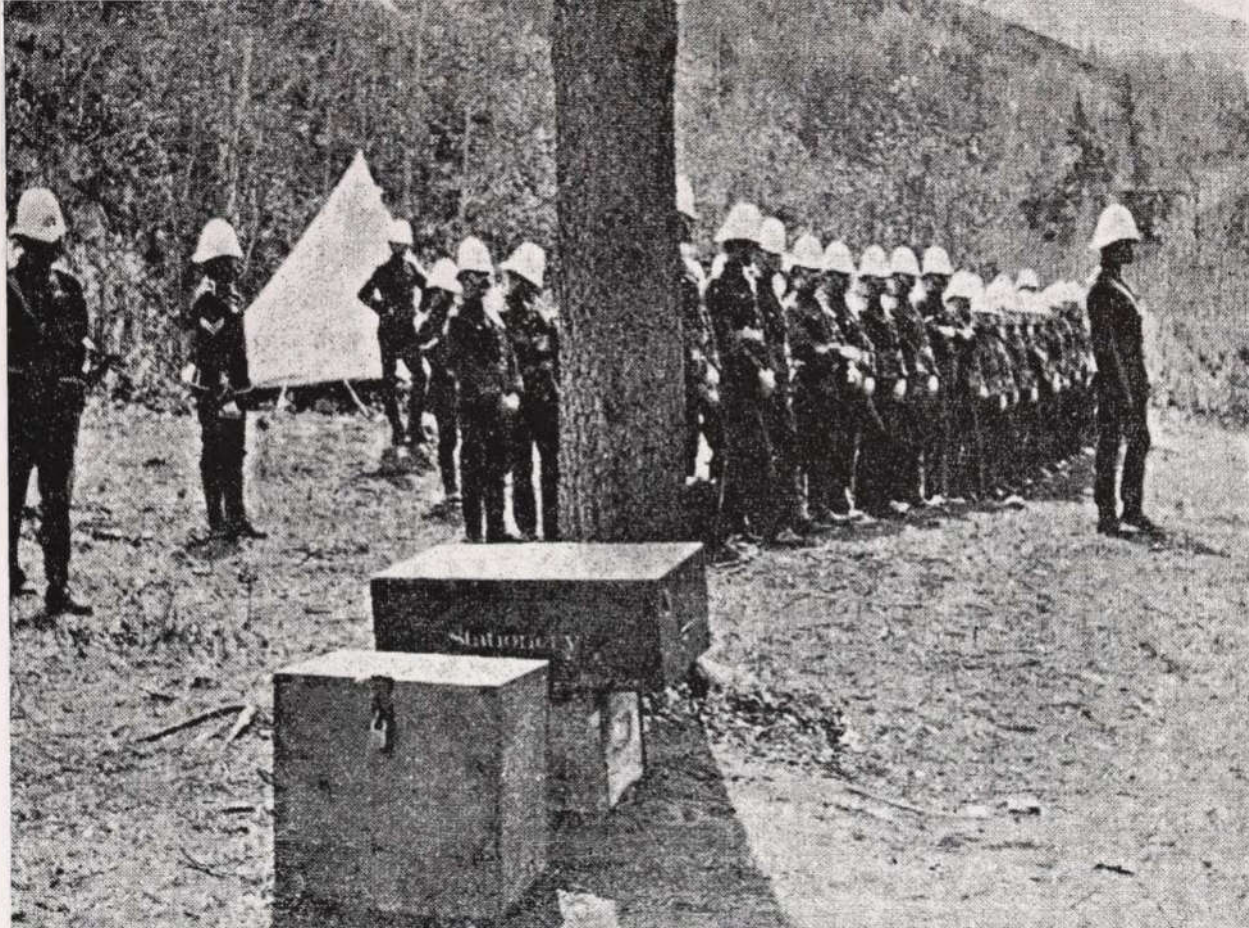
coats, white helmets, and polished equipment were in perfect order, and reflected the confident acceptance of their duty. As the train pulled out the band played "The Girl I Left Behind Me." It was quite a day!

The Yukon Field Force had been authorized by Order-in-Council of 21 March 1898, following a brief announcement of its formation made to the House of Commons by Sir Wilfrid Laurier on 10 March 1898. A further statement on the purpose of the force was made by the Minister of Militia and Defence, F. W. Borden, on 4 May. At that time Mr Borden explained that the large influx of miners and speculators into the Yukon Territory had overtaxed the resources of the North-West Mounted Police "in the maintenance of law and order within the Territory" and that "it would better serve the objects in view to send a detachment of the permanent force" rather than increase the number of police serving in the area. The Minister then went on to say that the force would be limited to 200 officers and men of the regular militia, supported by "very few artificers and boatmen." He also pointed out to the House that, "the United States have at the present time, four companies of their regular troops in Alaskan Territory"—though he did not know their strength or disposition. He announced Fort Selkirk (then tentatively selected as

the future capital of the territory) as the ultimate destination of the expedition.

During the time between the authorization of the force and the departure from Ottawa, Colonel Percy Lake, the Quartermaster-General, was quite possibly the busiest man in the Department of Militia and Defence; for it was his duty to equip the expedition, arrange for transportation, and most important, to plan for supplies to accompany the troops by whatever means available. Reports of travel conditions in the Yukon, current in Ottawa at the time, were outdated or inaccurate and Colonel Lake's staff were saddled with the problems of sorting out the best route. Finally it was decided that on reaching Vancouver the whole force and its supplies would travel by water to Wrangell, Alaska, up the Stikine River by steamer to the head of navigation at Glenora or Telegraph Creek (depending on navigational conditions on the Stikine) and then overland to the southern end of Teslin Lake by way of the Telegraph Trail. The route would follow the waterway of Teslin Lake to its northern end, thence down the Hootalinqua River to the Lewes River\* and on to the less restricted waters of the Yukon to Fort Selkirk, some 400 miles from Glenora. Of this distance the overland route was estimated to be 150 miles.

\*The Hootalinqua is now the Teslin River and the Lewes has been redesignated a portion of the Yukon River. Fort Selkirk, first established by the HBC in 1848, was on the Yukon about a mile below the confluence of the Pelly and Lewes Rivers.



*The Yukon Field Force on parade at a camp on the Telegraph Trail*

The question of supply took careful consideration. Two Maxim machine-guns were taken, and provision made for two seven-pounder field guns. Three hundred rounds of ammunition per Lee-Enfield rifle and 12,500 rounds for each Maxim gun were provided. Contracts were let for rations which included 88,000 pounds of tinned meats, 43,000 pounds of "hard-tack" biscuits, and 138,000 pounds of flour. Other "necessities" included 250 pounds of soap, all for the cost of \$30,000.

While this activity was taking place in Ottawa, two widely different interests became involved in the expedition.

From Rideau Hall in Ottawa, Lady Aberdeen, acting in her capacity as Founder and President of the Victorian Order of Nurses, wrote to the editor of the *Toronto Globe* stating that four members of the Order had been appointed to accompany the military to the Yukon. Lady Aberdeen wanted the editor to advise his readers that, "all these ladies are fully trained nurses of great experience" and that they were fully aware of the hardships they would have to face but that they "counted the opportunity given to them of succouring suffering humanity under very adverse circumstances a joy, an honour." Exactly how the nurses became integrated with the Yukon Field Force may never be known, but

Lady Aberdeen's personal interest was probably enough. She nominated Miss Georgia Powell of Nova Scotia to be "in command" of the group and proceeded to apply herself to the design of their field equipment. By mid-April the small group was provided with a stout uniform of "duck suits made with a short skirt with bloomers and gaiters" in the style of a "natty bicycle suit." Heavy hobnailed boots were provided but some observers considered that, even with such equipment, women would never complete the march.

In Toronto Lady Aberdeen's letter caught the imagination of the editor. If nurses were to travel with the men, why not a newspaperwoman? Female correspondents were a rarity at the turn of the century but one was well known to the *Globe*. Miss Faith Fenton had done good work on the paper and had earlier made a name for herself on the staff of the *Toronto Empire*, a competitor of the *Globe*. She was the first editor-in-chief of the *Canadian Home Journal*. Single, strong and energetic, she was an ideal choice. The *Globe* reckoned that her columns would give a welcome break to its readers, who were being daily bombarded with lengthy despatches from Cuba describing the Spanish-American War, and delayed contributions from the British press concerning the military operations in the Sudan. Faith Fenton's com-

mission to accompany the Force was a wise move which resulted in competition papers being "scooped" on the coverage of later events.

As the troop train from Ottawa travelled westward to Vancouver it stopped at Winnipeg to pick up sixteen rank and file of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, the regular cavalry regiment with which Evans had served in the North-West before he left to organize the Yukon force. This detachment completed the complement. The Force now numbered 203 all ranks and five days after leaving Ottawa it reached Vancouver.

Arrangements had been made for the entire expedition (including Miss Fenton and the nurses) to embark on the steamer *Islander* of the Canadian Pacific Navigation Company but it was three days before all the stores were loaded and the ship ready to sail. The embarkation was disorganized. Someone had mixed up the passenger lists and the troops' quarters were occupied by a motley collection of civilian passengers—prospectors, tradesmen, gamblers, drifters, and sightseers. There was a courtly French nobleman with his Countess and family supported by an *entourage* of servants. A Chinese cook, making his way to the gold fields, was mistaken for a stowaway and tossed into the harbour. They were sorted out and the ship was soon under way to Wrangell in the Alaska Panhandle, where the Force landed on 16 May. The next two days were spent transferring stores and equipment from the *Islander* to two smaller stern-wheelers, *Strathcona* and the *Stikine Chief*, in preparation for the next leg of the journey up the Stikine River to Glenora.

Wrangell in '98 had a well-deserved reputation as a "sink-hole, an evil-smelling town of toughs"; and Evans took every precaution to keep the expedition from becoming involved in any incident that might involve his troops with the American "authorities," or leave them open to exploitation by followers of the notorious "Soapy" Smith or the operators of saloons and gambling-halls. Evans's judgement of the troops' reaction to Wrangell may have been prompted by the fact that on leaving Vancouver the soldiers became eligible to draw double pay for service in the Yukon. This meant that a private now drew eighty cents a day as basic pay. Events proved that he had nothing to worry about. The men were kept too busy.

Earlier in the year many outfits and their owners were lost on the Stikine when they attempted to stretch the season by travelling up the river ice during the spring thaw. But now the river was clear of ice and the spate had subsided to the point that the sturdy little stern-wheelers could risk passage against the heavy down-

stream current. It was an exciting experience. At times the paddles, at full speed, were barely able to achieve steerage for the craft; at night navigation was impossible, due to the series of sand-bars that obstructed the river course. Each evening the boats tied up to trees along the river bank. Heavy hawsers held them against the current, while all hands made ready for the next day's voyage. These were fine evenings of good food and song under lamplight. Among the troops were several musicians, and when the soldiers, nurses, and crew joined in concert and games the echoing valley walls carried the sound of their merry-making far up and down the river.

On 21 May the *Stikine Chief* made Glenora, "a wretched place, of six or eight houses" about 130 miles upriver from Wrangell. For the steamers, this was the end of the line. For the Yukon Field Force the real work was about to begin.

One hundred tons of stores were carried ashore, and re-organized into pack loads according to type and priority. Glenora lay fifteen miles below the settlement of Telegraph Creek, linked by a shore-line trail that intersected the Telegraph Trail some six miles inland from the river. This was the first stage of the overland route to Teslin Lake. From Evans's point of view, this first stage of packing was the most important. His men were required to do the work of stevedores and coolies. Any weakening of spirit could turn them against the task and jeopardize the speedy organization of the column. In this work Evans relied on the services of Major D. C. F. Bliss, an ex-officer of the Canadian Militia, employed by the department in charge of transportation and supply arrangements. Before leaving Ottawa, Bliss had been authorized to negotiate directly with civilian contractors upon matters pertaining to the day to day administration of the Force. He was the right man for the job. His military background, tactful personality and "clear-brained" appreciation of problems earned him the gratitude of all ranks.

Bliss, nevertheless, had his problems. The contractor, operating under very loose terms, had provided only 141 pack animals. Of these 25 were required for saddle horses, packers' supplies and fodder. At a load of 200 lb. per pack this left far too few to stage the supplies at the slowest pace. More animals had to be found; and Bliss rode up and down the trail to gather willing packers. He called at each arriving steamer and dickered for animals, against the requirements of smaller parties who were heading in the same direction as the Force. Within a week he was able to secure 170 horses and mules, but not without creating some ill-feeling towards the troops. But for one day intervening, serious trouble



*Miss Fenton's press copy is censored by Major D. D. Young, en route to Fort Selkirk*

*Sunday morning service at Telegraph Creek*

*Relaxing on the long march north—  
Captains Gardiner, Thacker, and Ogilvie*



could have developed. That day was 24 May 1898—the Queen's Birthday.

Colonel Evans ordered a full dress parade for the morning of "the Twenty-Fourth" and an afternoon of games and sports. The Force marched down from their camp ground above the tiny settlement to be greeted by several hundred Klondikers who had pitched camp around the small cluster of buildings within the last few days. The Colonel took the salute of his troops on the broad trail that served as the main street of the town. He ordered a *feu-de-joie* to be fired, and called upon the local Presbyterian minister to announce the exact hour of noon. The Rev. Mr Pringle, perched on a wood-

pile, sextant in hand, called out the time as the sun crossed the meridian. Evans called for "Three Cheers for The Queen" and again "Three for the Klondike Miners" then the crowd gave three and a tiger for "The Colonel and the Yukon Force." The sports events were a great success. The tug-of-war ended with a snapped rope. Someone opened a barrel of whisky. A huge bearded miner in sombrero and moccasins led the crowd in song. The Reverend Pringle set the woodpile alight, then despatched others to start bonfires on the hilltops. Evans ordered another salute to be fired. Another barrel was opened. As the column marched back to camp, the miners threw a few sticks of dynamite into the river as

their salute. From that day on, there was no sign of friction on the trail.

For the next week Evans busied himself with plans for the journey to Teslin Lake. He decided to organize into groups consisting of an advance party to lead the way followed by small detachments, each with its own

*"A" Company, YFF at Dawson.  
The gun detachment has one of  
the Maxim guns*



*Col Evans (second from right)  
travelling from Dawson to Fort  
Selkirk in the winter of 1898-9*



train of pack animals. A rear party was charged with the responsibility of a base camp. The plan stated that the last man to leave the base carried the last pound of stores to be moved forward. Camp was made every night and each detachment was to be complete in men, animals, and stores before the next day's march. The Colonel calculated on a fourteen hour work-day. The advance party, with Evans in command, consisted of some fifty soldiers, the most skilled axemen available and the artificers. Their ultimate task was to select a camp site and construct log barracks at Fort Selkirk as a headquarters for the Force. Early on the morning of 1 June the advance party struck out along the trail.

The name Telegraph Trail is misleading. It had been blazed and named after a wildly speculative commercial venture known as The Collins Overland Telegraph Line which was planned to link the west coast of America with Europe by crossing Bering Strait to hook up with a proposed Russian telegraph line across Siberia. It never reached Telegraph Creek\* and the route remained much as it is today, hard and difficult even in the best of seasons.

The track rose through the foothills of the Chechidla Range, along narrow rocky ledges, up back-breaking grades, and down steep treacherous slopes to the easier ground bordering slimy creek beds. Here dense clouds of mosquitoes plagued the men and drove the animals plunging into the underbrush. Each day was an agony of work. At times as many as fifty animals would be down

in swampland or stampeding through the bush. Saddle-horses were useless to ride over the uncertain paths and all ranks, including the women, made way on foot.

Here is what Nurse Georgia Powell had to say of the journey:

From mountain to swamp and bog—bogs into whose cold, damp, mossy depths we would sink to our knees, and under which the ice still remains; swamps where we trampled down bushes and shrubs to make footing for ourselves, and where the mules stick many times, often as many as twenty all down at once . . .

Through deep forest we went, where the trail was narrow and the branches of trees threatened our eyes or tore our veils disastrously, through tracts of burnt and blackened country, in some places the ashes still hot from recent burnings, and the dust rising in choking clouds under our feet; through forests of wind-fallen, upturned trees, whose gnarled roots and tangled branches made insecure and often painful footing; over sharp and jagged rocks, where slipping would be dangerous, we went trampling, leaping, springing and climbing, a strain that only the strongest and most sinewy women could bear . . .

. . . We used to get up at 2 in the morning, breakfast at 3, tents down and everything packed at 4 and all ready on the trail before five. Our lunch, or mid-day meal, consisted of two hard biscuits and a cup of water from the nearest spring, and I am glad to say good water was plentiful, the only good thing on the trail. Then we had dinner just when the train came in, sometimes 8 or 9, sometimes as late as 11 p.m.

\* Beaver, March 1942.



Under these circumstances the Force made almost twelve miles a day.

On their way along the arduous trail, the nurses rendered good service. Not only did they attend to the occasional ailments of the soldiers but they were seldom established in camp without appeals for aid from packers or miners who might travel miles to reach them as their fame spread along the trail.

During the first week of July, the column began to close up to the advance party's camp at the south end of Teslin Lake. The worst was over.

At Teslin Lake, Evans established a staging area that he named Camp Victoria. From there, the remainder of the journey was made by water; but first, there was the matter of boats. Whether it was shortsighted planning or the result of unforeseen circumstances may never be

*Lt-Col Evans at Dawson with his NCOs, who are wearing winter parade dress. In front is a dog-team used for winter travel*



known but, in any case, the main body of the Force with tons of stores was camped at the head of a 400-mile voyage to Fort Selkirk without boats!

By good fortune a little steamer, *Anglian*, was nearing completion on the ways of a small shipyard operated near Camp Victoria by the Canadian Development Company and Evans contracted with the builders that he was to have first call on her services. Accordingly he organized an advance party of 30 men and their stores to proceed independently, and with all haste, in the little vessel to Fort Selkirk. At the same time Evans detailed his second-in-command, Major D. D. Young, to organize a boat-building program to carry the main body of the Force in the event that the *Anglian* could not return for them in time to make another voyage before freeze-up. Calculating that the main body would require some time to finish the barracks started by the advance party at Fort Selkirk, the Colonel prepared written orders to Young which stated that, if the *Anglian* had not returned by 25 August, Young was to proceed to Selkirk with the

their craft. Five strongly built row-boats and four heavy scows were constructed. The scows were each 46 feet long 14 feet wide and 4 feet deep with a draught of 2 feet when fully loaded with 15 tons of cargo and about 30 men. Each scow carried 16-foot steering sweeps at bow and stern and two sets of similar propelling oars ranged in the thwarts. Provision was made for a large tarpaulin square-sail to be rigged in the event of favourable winds. For messing purposes each scow was equipped with a sheet-iron camp stove, fuel, and rations.

The building program was completed by 25 August but Young hesitated to set out with the "fleet" for three full days in the hope that the *Anglian* would return and spare the soldiers the unaccustomed task of river boating. By the morning of the 29th, Young could delay no longer and orders were given to cast off. Captain H. C. Thacker took the lead as pilot, with a bugler, in one of three row-boats. Major Young with the ensign followed in the second; the third carried the sergeant-major and orderlies. The scows formed "line ahead" and the other



*The Dawson detachment which travelled from Fort Selkirk in the winter of 1898-9*

main body in the boats and scows then under construction.

Assisted by some local workmen from the Development Company and guided by the advice of the artificers, the troops whip-sawed green timber into planking for

two row boats brought up the rear with Surgeon-Major Foster and Major Bliss each in command of his department. The convoy presented a strange picture of military tradition and enterprise. The troops tugged at the oars to catch a breeze while bugles sounded the daily routine



*Retreat Ceremony by the barrack guard who are in winter dress. Next to the bugler sounding the Retreat is the NCO carrying a carbine*

and navigational instructions. The stove pipes puffed wood-smoke and bare-armed cooks, with prodding forks, hovered over the stoves preparing meals for their passengers and crew. They called themselves "H.M.S. The Yukon Squadron."

The sail down the lake was free from mishap. Each evening the flotilla swung into shore and prepared a bivouac for the night. There was one memorable camp on the sandy shore where the troops were able to spear large salmon with their bayonets lashed to saplings. The cooks prepared pans of fresh bread, baked beans, and grilled huge slabs of the fish over camp-fires on the beach. In five days of varying weather the Force made the northern end of the lake, an average of 17 miles a day. Young then ordered a stop of 24 hours to redistribute the cargoes for greater safety on the downstream river passage that was to follow.

When the flotilla entered the current of the Hootalinqua manning the sweeps was trying work for the inexperienced boatmen. The scows would sometimes swing end-for-end in the fast water but they proved steady enough to prevent serious trouble. On 7 September, the boats swept by the famous Cassiar Bar gold workings and entered the muddy waters of the Lewes River. They had made over 130 miles in four days.

Fifty miles upstream from Fort Selkirk the river narrows to the treacherous Five Finger Rapids: five huge blocks of stone that split the river into channels of very swift swirling water. One—and only one—channel, some thirty feet wide, could accommodate the scows. This, the most hazardous point in the voyage, was reached at mid-morning on 9 September. Captain Thacker warned the others by ordering the Alarm sounded by his bugler and proceeded to select the channel and guide the other craft. Thacker and the other small boats had little difficulty but the ungainly scows were in real danger. The first slipped through on sheer luck but the second and third swung broadside-on as they entered the fast water. The men strained at the sweeps to avoid certain disaster on the rocks and prodded at the bottom to regain control. At the last second the current changed and they plunged through the channel. The fourth scow swept bows-on into the rapids and nearly swamped. Soon it was all over and the flotilla was in the calm downstream current of the Yukon River. At 8 p.m. on 11 September the Force reached Fort Selkirk.

The advance party had done great work in the construction of barracks for the Force. Twelve log buildings, almost completed, stood around a central parade ground on a small plateau overlooking the river. Evans quickly



*Front Street, Dawson, at the time the Yukon Field Force was there to assist the North-West Mounted Police.*



*Ruins of 2nd Avenue, Dawson, after the fire, April 1899*

put the men now available to finishing the work on the barracks. Temperatures of 50 below zero were soon to be expected and all precautions were taken to make the accommodation as sturdy and weather-proof as possible.

While these activities were taking place, Superintendent Sam B. Steele of the North-West Mounted Police made a reassessment of the situation within his jurisdiction and applied to the Yukon Commissioner to have 50 men of the Field Force despatched to Dawson to deal with the lawlessness brought about by the influx of thousands of miners and hangers-on. As a result of this request Colonel Evans selected Captain H. E. Burstall, Captain J. H. C. Ogilvy and 50 men to stand by ready to proceed. He ordered that, as the soldiers were the first seen in the north, all uniforms were to be patched and refurbished in a manner creditable to the smart regiments they represented. On the first day of October the Dawson detachment with two of the nurses and Miss Fenton embarked on the steamer *Gold Star* and arrived the following day at the Mounted Police barracks in Dawson. The long march of the Yukon Field Force was over.

For the next full year the Force, split between Dawson and Fort Selkirk, carried out garrison duties under the direction of the Mounted Police. They guarded gold shipments and banks, patrolled the streets and picqueted the municipal and territorial offices. They fought fires and subdued crowds of rioting miners. They built barracks and hospitals; drilled and trained. They earned the gratitude of all in the Territory but little word of their good work reached the outside save through the despatches of Miss Fenton. Their number represented one quarter of the entire regular forces of Canada and as the situation in the Yukon improved their need was felt in other parts of the country.

In September 1899 headquarters was transferred to Dawson and fifty per cent of the Force were withdrawn from the Territory by way of Skagway to return to their home stations. In June of 1900 the last troops were withdrawn after having formed a small unit of the militia, organized in Dawson, known as the Dawson Rifle Company.

As to the nurses, one had had to leave owing to a serious operation. One, with the consent of the Victorian Order, was appointed superintendent of a hospital at Dawson. One took a position at the post office. Miss

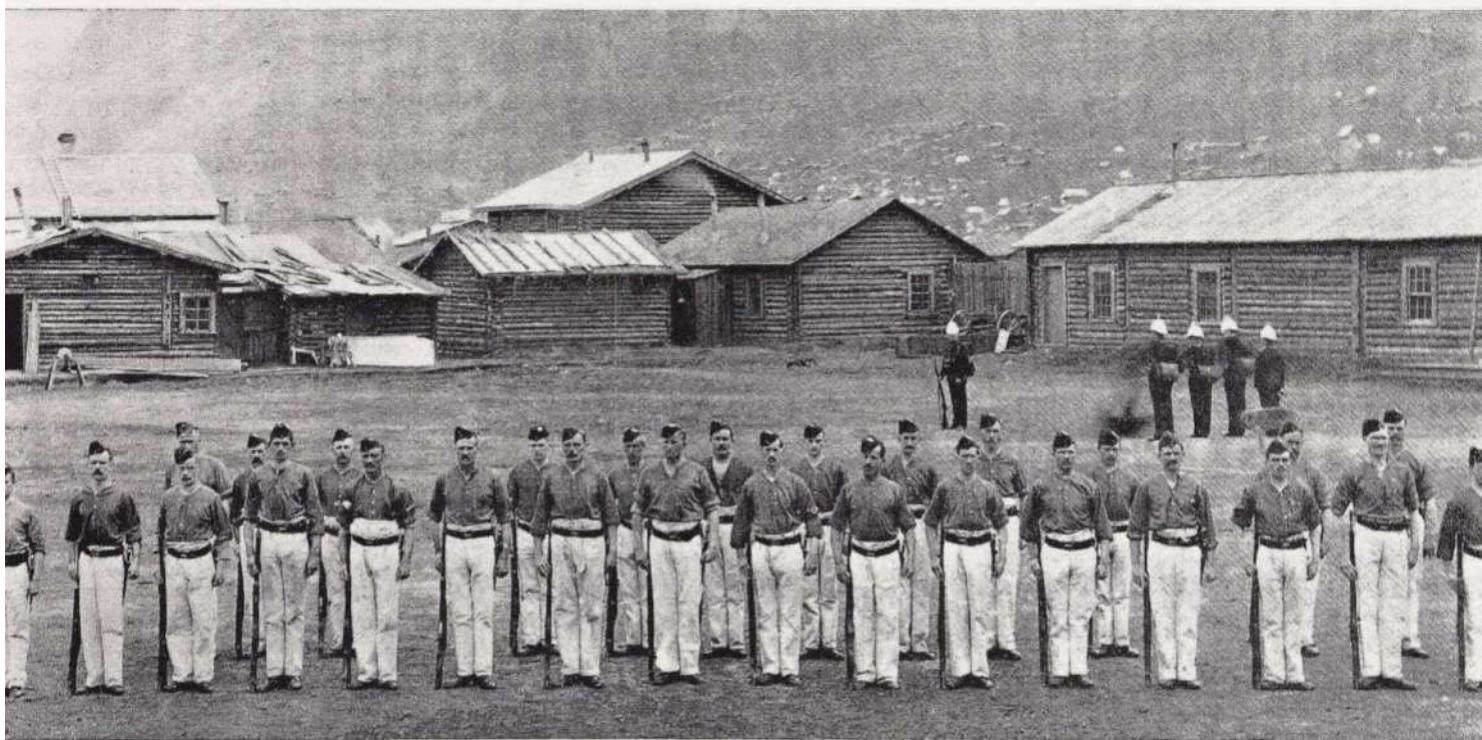
Powell remained at Dawson till she could be transferred in the spring to another post. The reporter, Faith Fenton, stayed on and married a local doctor; it was she who sent the first press despatch by telegraph out of Dawson in 1901.

The troops returned to their home barracks in time to mobilize for the war in South Africa and within a few months most were again on service. Colonel Evans took his regiment to that country and served two tours of campaigning. Many of his men served with him.

Surgeon-Major Foster became a major-general and Director General of Medical Services of Canada's overseas forces in 1918. He died in 1940. Burstall became Major-General Sir Henry Burstall and Thacker reached the same rank during the First World War. Both men died in 1945.

Today the Force is almost forgotten. The little boy who saw them off in Ottawa lived to die on Vimy Ridge. Fort Selkirk is deserted and traces of the barracks are only visible from the air. Camp Victoria is overgrown. The Telegraph Trail is unimproved. Somewhere along the old trail—no one seems to know where—there are two or three graves. These are the only known reminders of the path of the Yukon Field Force. ♦

*Troops drilling while barrack guard is being mounted behind them. On hill beyond is the tent camp of Dawson. 1900*



pelts to



parkas

BY J. R. LOTZ

*Mr Lotz whose experience in the north ranges from the McGill Subarctic Research Laboratory to Operation Hazen is now with the Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre of the Department of Northern Affairs*

HOW one small industry can change the face of an arctic town is being demonstrated by the "Aklavik Fur Garment Project."

The transition from the old way of life in the Arctic to the new has not been easy for the native peoples. The problem is particularly acute in the Mackenzie Delta. Here, within sight of each other, the two ways of life continue. The Indian and the Eskimo trapping muskrat in the delta lands can look out to the new town of Inuvik, where his brother or cousin or son may be driving a truck or operating a lathe. When he has secured enough muskrats, the trapper will trade them at Aklavik, while his wage-employed relative cashes his pay cheque at the bank in Inuvik.

Both towns can be considered relatively recent creations in a land that has been slowly built up from mud and silt over thousands of years. Aklavik is the centre of one of the richest muskrat trapping areas in the world, and was originally founded as a Hudson's Bay Company trading post in 1912. Later, the missions, the R.C.M.P., the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals and the Canadian Government built churches, schools, hostels, offices, stores, and installations there. The town's site, while an excellent one from a geographical point of view, was never satisfactory from a physical aspect. Good land was limited, so that the town could not expand, and it was

impossible to lay proper sewer and water lines. Nor, because of the permafrost conditions, could a permanent airstrip be built. The town was swamped in mud in the spring and summer, and the spring floods left their mark annually on the settlement.

So, in 1953, the federal government decided to move the town, and to build a new administrative centre to serve the Mackenzie Delta. After months of intensive work in the laboratory and the field, a new location,



called "East Three" was selected, and work on building the new town began.\* When Inuvik was officially opened by the Prime Minister on 21st July 1961, a modern settlement, with a population of over 1,700, serviced housing, large up-to-date hostels, a huge school, and a new hospital had arisen where before there were only tundra and forest. All those who wished to transfer from Aklavik were given land in the new town, and compensated for their buildings in the old. Many accepted the government's offer and moved to take up wage employment in Inuvik. Others stayed and would have nothing to do with the new town; Aklavik, they felt, was their home. The younger people might like the "bright lights," but they preferred "homely old Aklavik."

It seemed that Aklavik might become a dead weight during the development of this part of the north. While it was the centre of the hunting, trapping and fishing areas, there was little work available for those who had to live in the town itself—either from choice or necessity. Of the latter group, the most unfortunate were the widows with children and the older women generally. For them there seemed to be nothing to look forward to but relief and welfare payments in a future bleak and without promise.

But the germ of an idea formed in the minds of the local people and of the government administrators. Aklavik was in the heart of a fur trapping area. For years, the Eskimo and Indian women had sewn and made clothing from animal skins for themselves, their menfolk, and their children. Why not put the two together, and establish a fur garment project to see if this could provide a source of income for the local women?

As sometimes happens, the right idea and the right man came together at the right time. To instruct the

\*Beaver, Autumn 1960



*The town of Aklavik, set  
on frozen land in the watery  
delta of the Mackenzie River  
Villy Svarre*



*The muddy main street  
of Aklavik as it  
looked late last year  
J. R. Lotz*



*An Eskimo girl, Dorcas Allen, stretches pelts (top) and in another part of the workshop Caroline Moses, an Indian, trims skins*  
R. L. Porter

Eskimo and Indian women in the manufacture of fur garments, the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources hired Ernie Latour, an Edmonton furrier.

In February 1959 Latour arrived in Aklavik to start the project. Now it is being put on a commercial basis. The project, as originally envisaged, came into being as a vocational training program. This might seem like a relatively simple procedure, and yet it has really been a major accomplishment. The greatest achievement of all has been for Latour to build up and maintain the confidence of his workers. The atmosphere in the small factory is a relaxed, informal one, in which the women work happily and efficiently at cutting and sewing furs, and the manufacture of such items as muskrat and sealskin parkas, fur boots and slippers.

Ernie Latour, however, can recount many a harrowing tale of the early days. At first, some women would just walk away from their jobs, and never return. Others could not keep regular hours. Now the workers not only arrive promptly, but even bring notes to explain any absences to the supervisor. Before the project moved into its present building, it made its home in three rooms above the federal day school. The mothers who were employed paid more attention to their children in the schoolyard below than they did to the work in hand. Latour found himself acting as school superintendent as he stayed late at night to give extra instructions, and to clear up after his workers had left.

The long slow process of accustoming the women to work in a small industrial enterprise continued, complicated at times by misunderstandings. The women had to be taught many things—not just how to make fur garments. Latour noticed great grease spots on the women's skirts. Further investigation showed that these were due to the presence, in the pockets of the skirts, of pieces of raw fish that the women nibbled from time to time. Under Latour's coaxing, many of the women began to smarten themselves up at work, and in time, the fish disappeared from their pockets. Latour vividly remembers the time his workers attempted to use the steam iron he brought with him. Watching him fill it with a colourless fluid, they assumed that it was high octane gas which they used in the tea-kettle stove. With their curiosity aroused and Latour absent, they carried out an experiment in the use of the steam iron. They filled it with gas, plugged it in. As Ernie Latour said, "I always wanted to know what the inside of a steam iron looked like. That day I found out!"

On another occasion, when the project moved to its present quarters in a former two-room school, Latour

had work benches made. Being somewhat on the short side, he had them made fairly low. Next day when his workers trooped in to work, he discovered that waist height for him was chest height for the diminutive Eskimo and Indian women. He had to hunt up a carpenter, and get him to saw six inches off each table leg.

Some of the older patterns of behaviour still persist in the workshop, enriching it, and giving it a unique arctic flavour. One old woman chatters to the others in Eskimo all day, telling, as she sews, the same legends and stories of her people as did her mother and grandmother before her. The little factory closes down in July so that the women can go to the sea coast to take part in the annual whale hunt. An attempt to get some of the trained women to take over as supervisors failed. No one wanted to be "boss," and no one wanted to be "bossed."

There have been great successes in adaptation, and there have been failures too. Some of the women were not suited to this type of work; others had to stop training because of the need to look after their families, or because of poor health. Others went with their husbands to Inuvik, and so were lost to the industry. By the end of 1961, however, eleven women were fully trained as fur garment makers, and another nine had almost completed their training.

The project has put money into the pockets of the workers, and hope into the heart of Aklavik. The inhabitants of the community look upon the factory with pride. It is their project, their industry. Its worth can never be measured merely in dollars and cents, but must be judged by the confidence that it has inspired in the settlement. It will have to face a severe test as it changes from a training scheme to a commercial undertaking. Production is still small, and the workers cannot cope with a heavy demand for fur and sealskin parkas, boots, slippers and mitts.

From being shy, untrained women, despondent and without hope, the working force of the fur clothing business has become a unique group in the Canadian Arctic. Some have bought and furnished houses; all have learnt to care for their appearance. The little factory is neat and orderly, the washroom and kitchen immaculate. Show cases display the women's work, and on cards round the walls are mounted samples of furs from different parts of the world. It has become a show place in the area, and a number of tourists visit it every year.

Ernie Latour and his small group of women have shown that, with time, patience, understanding, and mutual respect, the women of the Canadian Arctic can effect the painful transition from the old way of life to the new without too many tears. ♦

*Sorting skins by shade*

*R. L. Porter photos*



*The building of the fur garment project*



*Examining a finished muskrat parka*



# THE HOUSE ON THE RUGGLES

BY MOREAU S. MAXWELL



*Dr Maxwell, curator of anthropology at the museum of Michigan State University, represented the National Museum of Canada in 1958 on the Canadian International Geophysical Year expedition to northern Ellesmere Island. His detailed archaeological report has been published as National Museum Bulletin 170. Photographs in this article used by courtesy of the National Museum of Canada*



*A helicopter from the USS "Atka" hovers over the small camp on the Ruggles*

APRIL the 30th 1882 was a day of surprises for Lieutenant A. W. Greely and three men of his twenty-five-man Lady Franklin Bay Expedition in northern Ellesmere Island. Two days before, they had penetrated Conybeare Fiord west of the exploration limits reached by Lieutenant Archer of the Nares Expedition six years before. Sledging along the ice foot that bordered the north shore of the fiord, they had been awe-struck at the steep, two-thousand-foot talus slopes and the piles of huge, angular, frost-riven blocks of stone which hung precariously on the steep summits. Although the temperature ranged from a few degrees below to a few degrees above zero, a bright sun shone during most of the twenty-four-hour day. From time to time the sun would melt the thin films of ice which held the frost-cracked blocks to the steep slopes and rocks would tumble from the crest, dislodge others and sweep down in roaring avalanches which scattered boulders a hundred yards out on the bay ice. At night the four men had come to a break in the cliffs, and had camped at the mouth of a narrow gorge which they named Chandler Fiord. The fiord appeared to penetrate northward towards the glacier-covered peaks of the United States Range.

They had started sledging early on the morning of the twenty-ninth, and in an hour had reached the foot of what the night before they had judged to be a glacier disgoring into Chandler Fiord. To their amazement, they found this to be an ice dam, twenty-five feet high,

formed as the cold water of a river tumbled into the fiord. Once the wall was crossed, the men found themselves on a delightfully smooth highway of river ice which made pulling the sledge effortless. The men practically ran in the exuberance of being released from the confinement of their winter quarters at Fort Conger. Surprise followed surprise as they traversed the ice-covered highway which they called Ruggles River. At many places holes in the ice exposed that rare arctic delicacy, fresh cold water; so rare where all water required precious fuel for melting ice. The men laughed as Private Whisler often plunged his face in icy pools and drank deeply in luxurious wastefulness.

The men were tired; Lieutenant Greely felt that a long rest was indicated and so they did not resume travelling until three in the afternoon of the thirtieth. In the words of Greely: "At 7 P.M. we were astonished beyond measure at reaching a point where the stream was open. I was almost inclined to doubt the evidence of my own eyes, and, indeed, rubbed them once before answering the inquiry of one of the men as to what that was." They travelled alongside the open river, and then: "A couple of hundred yards farther and a sharp turn brought in sight a scene which we shall all remember to our dying day [which for Privates Whisler and Bender was less than two years away]. Before us was an immense ice-bound lake. Its snowy covering reflected 'diamond dust' from the midnight sun, and at our feet was a broad pool



of open blue water which fed the river. To the northward some eight or ten miles—its base at the northern edge of the lake (Hazen)—a partly snow-clad range of high hills (Garfield Range) appeared, behind and above which the hog-back, snow-clad summits of the United States mountains rose with their stern, unchanging splendor."

Two months later Lieutenant Greely returned to this corner of the Ruggles River and beautiful Lake Hazen, this time by way of the Black Rock Vale, to find it no less awe inspiring in summer. He, Sergeant Lynn, Corporal Salor, and Privates Bierderbick and Whisler (of whom only Greely and Bierderbick were to survive starvation at Cape Sabine in the two following years) arrived at the mouth of the Ruggles on June 28th, with the temperature in the high fifties. According to Greely, "The sky was partly covered with true cumulus clouds, quite rare in Arctic heavens; the sun marked with checkered bars of sunshine and shadow the babbling river, the large blue pool, and its noisy occupants; the temperature was high, and the gay yellow poppies and other flowers drew to them gaudy butterflies. If one but turned his back to the central ice of Lake Hazen, and the bursting glaciers from the ice-clad mountains northward of the Garfield Range, and gazed southward to the low brown hills faintly tinged with olive-green, he could well imagine himself in the roaring forties instead of eight degrees [less than six hundred miles] from the geographical pole. Four long-tailed ducks were noisily swimming and feeding at the junction of the river, and many turnstones, with a few skuas and terns, were flying about. The whole hills on either side were tinged with green from the fresh leaves of the young willow and an occasional bed of dryas and saxifrages."

Before leaving the mouth of the Ruggles, Greely's party discovered and partially excavated two prehistoric Eskimo houses. In his report of the expedition Greely

noted that these were the farthest north that winter houses of the prehistoric Eskimos had ever been found, an observation still true after more than three-quarters of a century of arctic archaeology.

In the summer of 1958 it was my privilege and pleasure to represent the National Museum of Canada as archaeologist on the eighteen-man Defence Research Board expedition to Lake Hazen. Archaeologists had long assumed, largely on the basis of Greely's finds, that early people of the Dorset culture and the later Thule Eskimo had passed through the Hazen Valley in their migrations from Alaska to Greenland in the first thousand years of the Christian Era. My mission was to cover as much terrain as possible in the three summer months in search for remains of these early migrations. The search started auspiciously. Dr Robert L. Christie, Mr Barry Walker, both of the Geological Survey of Canada, and I were to dog-sledge from the base camp on Lake Hazen to the shores of Conybeare Fiord where I would start my exploration. We crossed the lake, and on the first of June stopped for tea at the mouth of the Ruggles. The site of Greely's Eskimo house was covered with snow, but the depression was clearly apparent, and I knew its excavation would wait for at least a month. Near the open river there was one patch of snow-free gravel barely twelve feet long and two feet wide. With a pilot biscuit in one hand, I searched the gravel, and found a beautifully carved white ivory harpoon foreshaft. Surely if one small patch of gravel could produce such a fine artifact, the summer, once the snow had melted, would be most productive.

Unfortunately, this was not a faithful omen. Christie, Walker, and I sledged to the south shore of Conybeare Fiord where I made my camp on a small delta we called Lonesome Creek. I stayed there alone while they sledged on to the east and south. At Lonesome Creek I found

*Far left: Aerial view of the canded ice on Lake Hazen. Base camp is on shore at upper left*

*Left: Looking across Lake Hazen at 2 o'clock in the morning to glacier-streaked mountains*

*Dr Christie, Geological Survey, and Dr Michel Brochu, Geographical Branch, begin excavation in the house on the Ruggles*



the remains of some forty dwellings, but they all appeared to be summer or autumn tent rings and the artifacts were few. Furthermore, I searched many miles of coastline east and west of Lonesome Creek and found only a few similar tent rings of about the same period. These were obviously not the remains of early migrants, but of occasional hunting parties who, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries A.D. had come northwest from the large Thule and Inugsuk settlements of Inglefield Land on Greenland for a season of musk-ox and caribou hunting. The tools and ornaments recovered had some technical significance\*. For example, there were many beads of amber from the coal seams at the east end of Lake Hazen, explaining the mystery of two amber beads found earlier at Nugalit on Greenland and one at Resolute on Cornwallis Island. But the major scientific conclusions were negative ones—that the early populating of Greenland took place by some more southerly route than the Hazen Valley.

Negative conclusions are as important in science as positive ones, but somehow they are less exciting. They do not seem to make up for weeks of lonely camping with no sounds other than the occasional roar of an avalanche across the fiord and the monotonous cries of the knots and the skuas (jaegers). When Christie and Walker returned we cached the dog sled and back-packed up the Black Rock Vale to the Lake Hazen base camp. In this walk we believe we were the first humans to retrace Greely's trail of 1882.

I was anxious to return to the prehistoric house on the Ruggles, and in the first week of July I crossed from base camp over the Lake Hazen ice to the south shore. The ice was still three feet thick but it was beginning to candle, forming long vertical crystals loosely bonded together, and it had little strength. It could still support our small tractor, and I was hauled across the lake in

comfort. The pool at the mouth of the Ruggles had widened to an open lead one hundred feet wide between ice and shore which necessitated the use of a rubber raft. It was still early in the day when I made my camp three feet away from the old house ruin, but I was tired. I tantalized myself with refraining from starting the excavation while I lay down for a long rest. The temperature was in the high fifties, a warm rain was falling (the only rain of the whole summer) and it was pleasant to lie in the tent. But a nagging worry bothered me. If the lake ice canded too much to support the tractor, or even to support my weight, I would be stranded alone until the helicopters from the U.S.S. *Atka* arrived in the second week of August. I had already spent three weeks alone, listening to the sound of my own breathing, and I felt I could not face another month and a half of silence. At midnight I panicked! The edge of the ice which at noon had been only one hundred feet from shore was more than a half mile away. I packed my gear in a backpack, inflated the rubber raft and set out for the edge of the ice. It was seven in the morning when I finally reached base camp. The whole trip had been a nightmare; two hours spent in trying to get through to ice solid enough to support my weight; the pack had been heavy, and the canded ice rough on my feet. But, my strongest regret was that I would now probably never have the opportunity to excavate the house on the Ruggles.

For the rest of the summer we had to stay on the north shore of the lake, and a return to the Ruggles was impossible. The ice never left the lake but remained in large drifting sheets of crystals two feet thick, too strong to drive a boat through, and too weak to support any weight. From time to time leads would open along the shore, and we were able to push to the east end where I excavated more tent rings with meagre artifact remains. Finally in the first week of August a lead opened across

\*Moreau S. Maxwell, *An Archaeological Analysis of Eastern Grant Land, Ellesmere Island, Northwest Territories*, National Museum of Canada, Bulletin 170, 1960.



*Looking eastward across the partially excavated Eskimo house. In the foreground is the box-shaped meat locker which supported the east sleeping platform, and in the background the wall of boulders which blocked off the west sleeping platform during the last occupation of the house. The large wooden side runner of a dog sled lies in the entrance passageway to the right.*

the lake. Christie and I crossed to the mouth of the Ruggles and I remained to excavate the ruined house.

Although most of the semi-subterranean house was covered with thick moss sod and tough willow roots, the extent of the Greely party's digging seventy-six years before was apparent. They had had no shovels, and had merely scratched in the surface gravel around the wall rocks with empty ration cans, some of which still remained under the sod.

In the week that followed I excavated the ruined house as carefully, but as rapidly as possible, racing against the day when the U.S.S. *Atka's* helicopters would arrive to return us to civilization. The history of the house was a three-fold one. By comparing the tools and ornaments which it contained with similar artifacts from Comer's Midden, and Inglefield Land sites on Greenland, it appeared that the house at the mouth of the Ruggles was originally built about A.D. 1300. The Eskimo builders had scooped an oval depression three to six inches deep in the fine beach gravel, making a smooth area eighteen



*Fourteen-inch bone snow knife, with ivory button that was tied to its lanyard, near the remains of two wooden harpoon shafts*

feet long and eight feet wide. On the north edge, facing Lake Hazen, they had dug a narrow "cold-trap" entrance eleven feet long, two feet wide, and twenty-six inches deep, running at right angles to the long axis of the house. They had lined the floor and the walls of this entrance passage with flat rocks, and had laid large flat sandstone slabs over the central floor area, making a kitchen-living room area seven by seven feet. At the east end they had carefully made two stone boxes of slabs set on end, and had lined them with moss. These were the meat lockers, and since they were deeper than the present permafrost line, they still contained bits of flesh and fur from musk-oxen and arctic hare, frozen and preserved for seven centuries. The stone boxes formed a foundation for the large stone slabs of a sleeping platform, four inches above the floor level, and four feet long by seven feet wide, which in use was probably covered with caribou and musk-ox hides. A similar sleeping platform at the west end rested on low supporting rocks. The roof, presumably,

pression remained open long enough for lake storms to wash eight to ten inches of fine gravel over the floor, and to pile ridges of gravel along the house margin. At this time world-wide temperatures were growing progressively colder, and a contraction crack in the soil mantle, underlain here by clear, permanently frozen ice, developed along the entryway and across the short axis of the house. It was probably not more than twenty-five years after the original occupants left that a second family utilized the house. They scooped out much of the gravel on the floor, piling it along the margins; repaired the sleeping platforms, and put new paving stones over the cracked entryway and kitchen floor. The frost crack had opened a small chamber in the south wall, with clear ice at its base. The second occupants walled this with stone slabs, making a small ice chest for meat storage, a handy device for the three summer months when meat quickly becomes rancid and maggoty in spite of temperatures which are little above those of the average modern



*Mingled remains on the east sleeping platform which provide clues to the last occupants. On top of the sandstone slab of the sleeping platform lie dog bones, the caribou antler handle of a woman's pail, the ribs and right shoulder and arm bones of an Eskimo woman, and a carved whale bone comb (upper left)*



*The man of the house had cached a small bag of broken and unfinished tools under the east sleeping platform, presumably to work on during the winter. The bag contained lance heads, a harpoon finger rest, and a composite drill with a shaft of caribou antler and wood and a point of iron*

was a skin tent propped on poles and held down at the edge by boulders which ringed the oval house depression.

The original builders seem to have used the house for only one winter, and then abandoned it. The house de-

refrigerator. Again, after a winter or so, the house was abandoned, and forty or fifty years of lake storms and floating sheets of ice washed and pushed layers of gravel into and over the house.

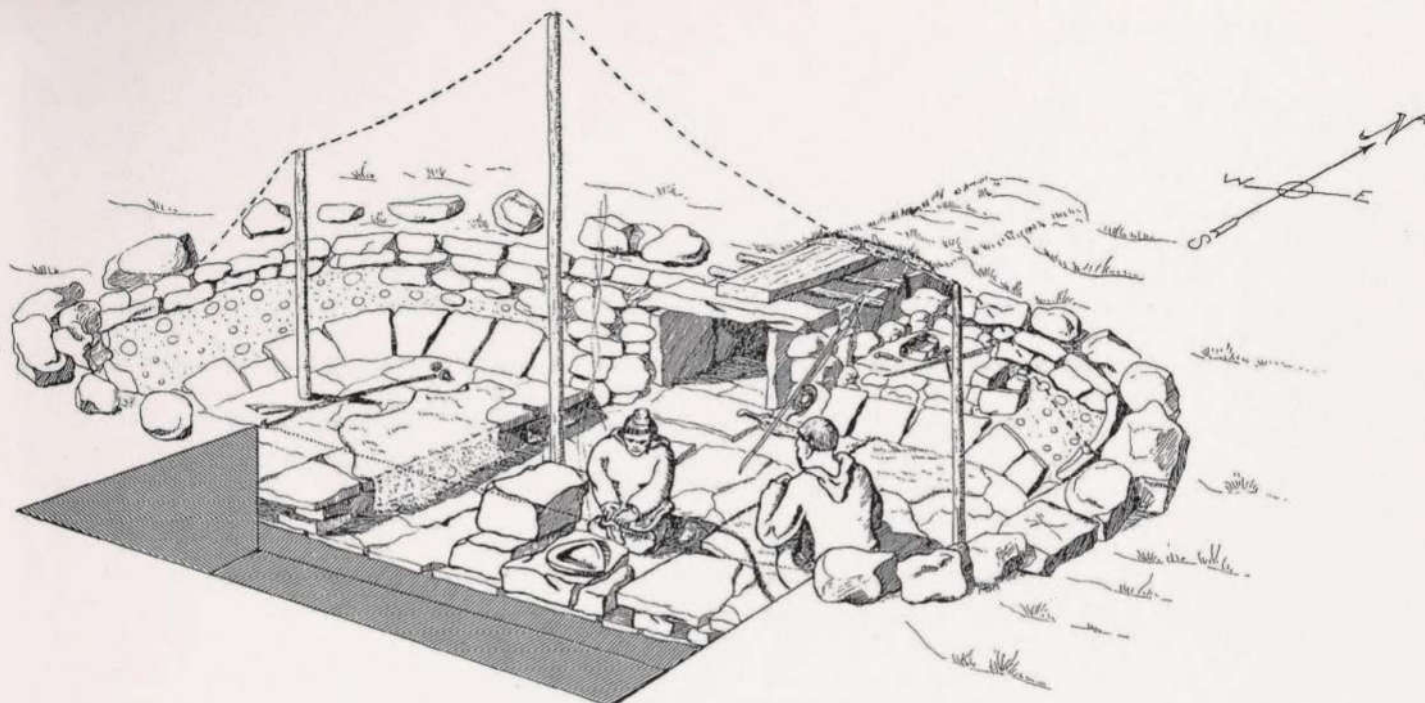
Sometime around A.D. 1400 a small Eskimo hunting party, presumably one family, re-occupied the house. Again, they scooped gravel out of the centre and piled it round the edges; so that the kitchen floor was now three feet below the surrounding surface, and the structure resembled a pit house. They repaired the floor and the east sleeping platform, now a small ledge five feet long and five feet wide. Probably there were only two of them, a man and wife, and, no longer needing the extra space which would have been difficult to heat, they walled off the west end, making a storage chamber and platform for a small cooking fire. Their soapstone blubber lamp, for cooking and heating the shelter, they placed on a small platform of rock at the south edge of the kitchen—the same spot where the blubber lamps of the preceding two sets of occupants had stood. They made no attempt to scour out the entryway, which they roofed with the wood from a dog sled, and there was now only eighteen inches between the heavy lintel rock and the floor slab where the door opened into the house. It is difficult to imagine people dressed in heavy skins worming their way through this narrow channel.

The amount of debris on the floor—animal bones, broken tools and other refuse—suggests that they lived here for about three winters. For the warm summer months they had built a circular ring of boulders to hold down a summer skin tent just north of the winter house. The man was apparently a good hunter, and the couple could be considered relatively wealthy. In a region twelve hundred miles north of the timber line, where driftwood is extremely scarce, they had at least two dog sleds with runners made of single wooden planks five feet long and two inches thick. At least one of these sleds was a spare, for it had been used as a roof over the entrance passage. The wood, and a few tools of iron, undoubtedly had come originally from the Norse, and had been traded along the west coast of Greenland from Upernivik. The commodious tent roof was held up in the centre by a pole nine feet long which Greely found and by poles four feet long over the sleeping platform.

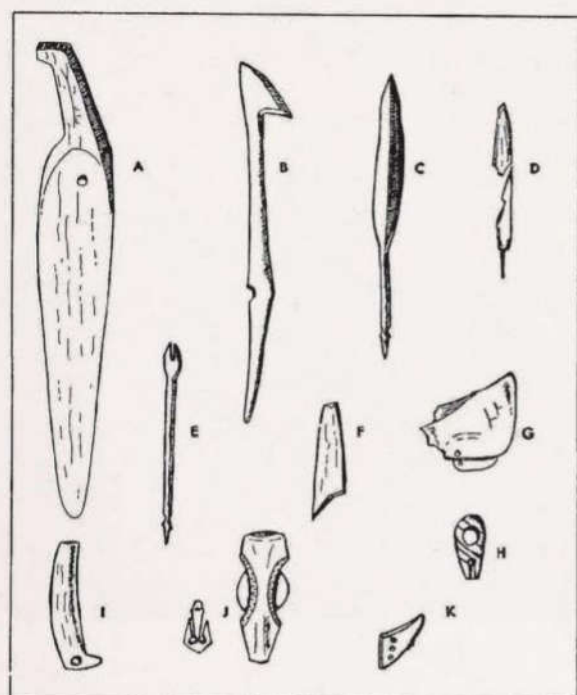
Relatively speaking, it must have been a comfortable location. The Hazen valley is now much colder than the sea coast (members of the McGill University winter party recorded a temperature of  $-68.5$  degrees Fahrenheit in the winter of 1958) but in that time the winter temperatures probably did not often go below forty degrees below zero. Even in the coldest weather the pool at the mouth of the Ruggles, well stocked with arctic char, remained open due to complex hydraulic factors. Musk-oxen and caribou wintered close by in the narrow valleys north of the lake.

The archaeological evidence is fairly clear that tragedy interrupted the lives of this family. The man died. His body was carefully placed in the circle of rocks defining the summer tent ring, and rocks were piled over him in a partially successful attempt to protect his body from wolves and foxes. Inside the winter house, objects lay scattered where they had been left in daily living. Walrus and narwhal ivory dog toggles, pieces of whale bone sled runners, spare knife handles, a large fish spear, a soapstone bowl, and a beautifully carved narwhal tusk tube for drinking fresh water from the surface of spring ice lay in the west storage chamber. In an alcove in the north wall were long, slender probes of whale bone for testing the consistency of snow for igloo blocks; a small stone bowl, an ivory sinew twister for tightening the lashings on a sinew-wrapped hunting bow, a narwhal tusk harpoon for ice hunting, and a bag of amber beads and nuggets. Seal-towing gear, old knives, a drill socket mouthpiece, harpoon and fish spear parts, and a snow beater littered the entryway. On the floor and round the sleeping platform were a large whale bone snow knife for cutting igloo blocks, a beautiful ivory needle case (marked with the teeth of babies who had used it for teething) and an anchor-shaped thimble holder, an ulu or woman's knife, and shafts of spears and harpoons. A small bag of men's tools—an iron-tipped drill, a wooden fire drill and hearth, partially finished harpoon, arrow and lance points—lay in a small niche under the sleeping platform. On the sleeping platform was the evidence of the last act of the tragedy. Here was an ivory comb, the partial skeleton of a young woman, dog bones, and a four-foot tent pole. Presumably the young widow, led by her adventuresome husband to this lonely spot three hundred miles north of the large settlements on Greenland, had been left with no alternative but to eat the last of the sled dogs, and finally to die of starvation as she lay alone on the sleeping platform.

Completion of the excavation and the arrival of the helicopters coincided. It was midnight of what I knew would be my last day at this unusually beautiful spot at the top of the world. The sun was bright, but low on the horizon, and except for a pair of loons far out on the lake it was very still. What a lodestone this spot had been for the venturesome. First, Eskimo hunters who had wanted to go a little farther than anyone else, then five centuries later, Greely's historic and ill-fated party. Robert E. Peary had camped here in 1900. Eskimos in Peary's expeditions of 1905 and 1908 had hunted here, and in 1909 it was musk-ox meat supplied by Etah Eskimos camped at the mouth of the Ruggles and at the east end of Lake Hazen that had provisioned Peary in



Above is a schematic reconstruction of the 13th century Eskimo house, the south wall cut away (dotted line) to show the interior. The oval dwelling was dug about 3 feet into the gravel and lined on floors and wall with flat slabs of sandstone. A centre pole at least 9 feet high and side poles about 4 feet high supported a skin tent (indicated by dashed lines) over the pit house. Sleeping platforms at both ends of house were covered with skins. The plank covering part of the long entryway in north wall is the side runner of a dog sled. Among 250 artifacts found in the house were a fish spear and dog-trace toggles on west sleeping platform, harpoon and snow knife near entry, ulu or woman's knife on floor, soapstone lamp in small niche in south wall, soapstone bowl, knife, narwhal tusk harpoon, and snow probe in the northern alcove. Some of the artifacts are sketched below. A: snow knife made of whale rib. B: side prong for leister or fish spear. C: lance tip carved from antler. D: composite drill bit of wood, antler, and iron traded from Greenland. E: lance head slotted for stone or iron blade. F: unfinished harpoon head. G: antler and iron ulu. H: narwhal ivory dog toggle. I: bone knife handle. J: ivory thimble holder and needle case. K: finger rest for harpoon shaft.



his dash for the pole. MacMillan had apparently been here, and in 1915 Ekblaw, crossing the Hazen Valley from west to east had left the lake by way of the Ruggles. The Oxford University Ellesmere Land Expedition had camped here in 1935 and fished for char to feed their dog teams in the exploration of the glaciers of Grant Land. In 1957 the Defence Research Board Expedition under Dr Geoffrey Hattersley-Smith\*, the first major exploratory expedition to the Hazen Valley since Greely's, had camped beside the house on the Ruggles; in the winter of 1957 C. R. Harington of the McGill University meteorological team had crossed the lake alone and been the first, and to date the only non-Eskimo to see the steaming water at the mouth of the Ruggles in mid-winter. In the summer of that year Dr Christie and Barry Walker of the Geological Survey of Canada stopped their dog team here on the first land crossing from the shelf ice of the polar shore, across the glaciers to the fiords of Robeson Channel.

This intriguing and beautiful spot will draw others. Since nothing ever changes in the arid High Arctic, it is reassuring to know that the ruins of the house on the Ruggles will still be there many centuries from now. ♦

\* Beaver, Winter 1961.



# THE LAST SALUTE

to M. V. Rupertsland

OCTOBER 1960 was two weeks old when the Hudson's Bay Company supply ship, the *Rupertsland*, entered Pangnirtung Fiord, in Cumberland Sound, Baffin Island. It was the ship's most northerly port of call on her annual Arctic journey, delivering stores to remote Eskimo settlements, and she had seldom been so late in Pangnirtung. The water was already thickening and the first snows of winter had fallen when Captain Lloyd nosed the salt-caked bow of his ship into the deep-cleft, mountain-flanked inlet. For ten years, he had brought the Clyde-built ship north, but a growing northern population demanding a greater volume of stores had made the tough little cargo vessel obsolete, and she was to be superseded by a bigger ship when her 1960 trip to the Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait settlements was ended.

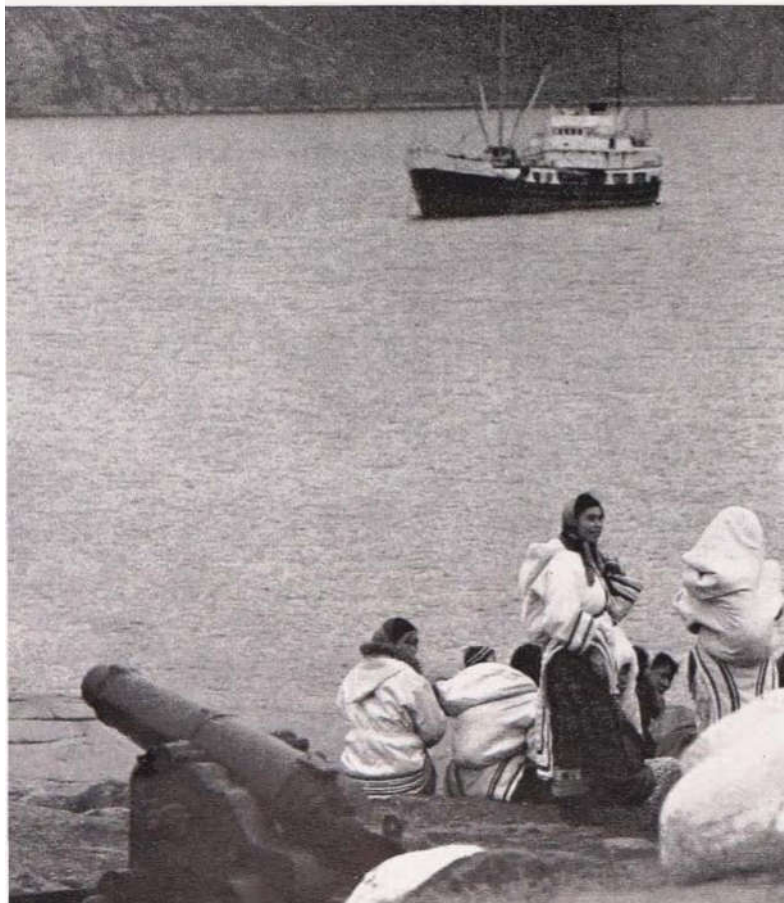
It was a glorious morning when the M.V. *Rupertsland* sailed slowly up Pangnirtung Fiord. She had arrived at the inlet during the night and had waited for morning light before she navigated the shoal-strewn passage to her unloading anchorage. By seven o'clock, all the passengers were out on deck, or standing in the bridge wings to get a clearer view of the magnificent, towering mountains glowing under their pink snow caps as the morning sun tinted the pearly shell of the sky. Flanking the fiord, the sheer mountains were steeped like acres of church belfries . . . snow clinging to their sides looked as frothy as cascades tumbling down steep cliffs. The ship's purser, passing along the boat deck, remarked "God's in His heaven this morning."

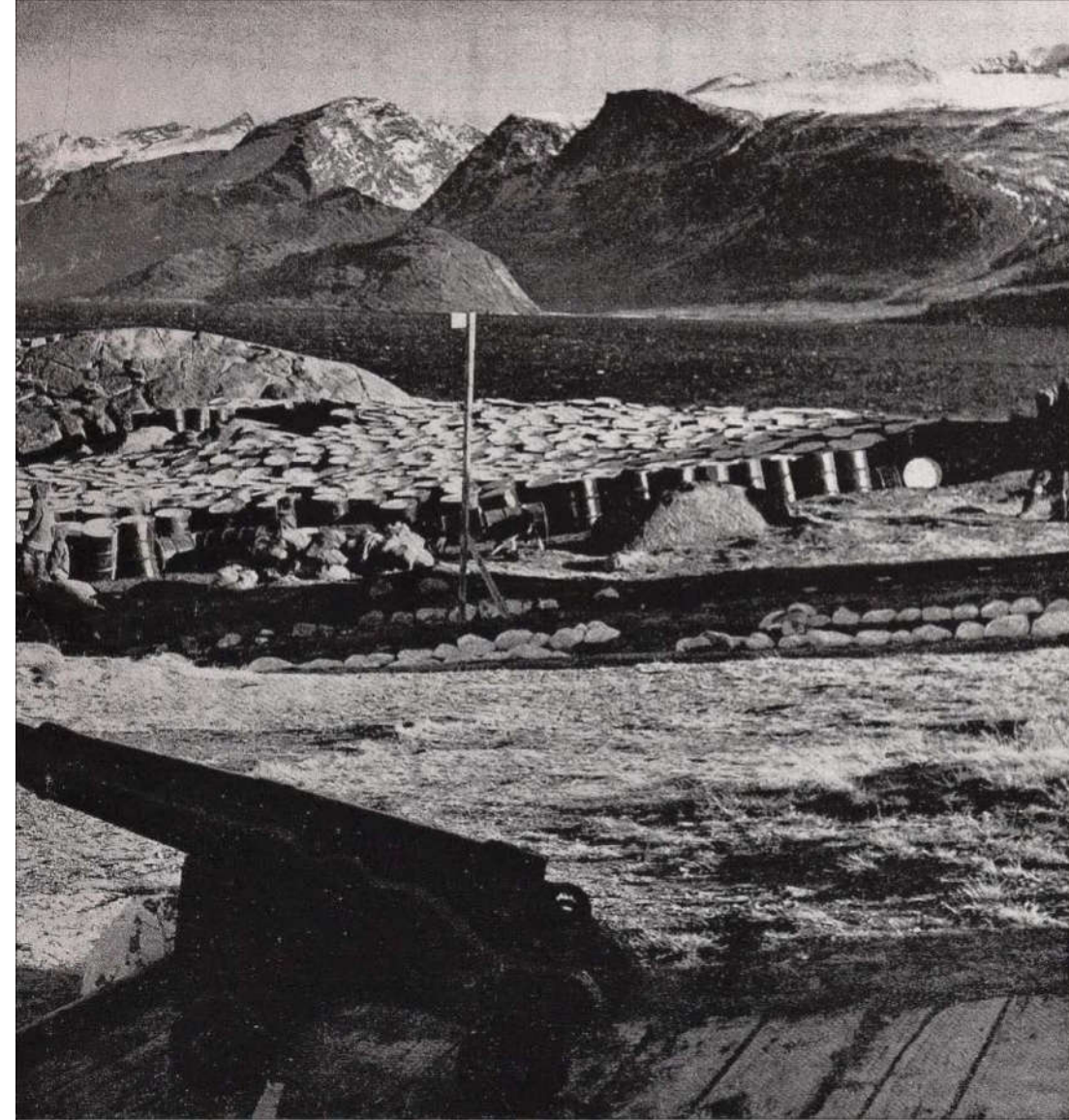
Dogs could be heard howling on shore, and a group of jostling Eskimos gathered on the landing beach as the *Rupertsland* nosed her way slowly up the channel, hove-to opposite the trading post and rattled her anchor chain down the hawsepipe. An H B C ensign streamed in the breeze from the flag pole on the cliff top and behind it, the warehouse, store and white-painted buildings gleamed in the morning light. A stout motorboat purred out to meet the cargo ship and the store manager came aboard. He was ending a tour of duty and the new manager and his family were among the first people to disembark. Few Eskimo tents could be seen on shore as most of the families had already departed for their winter camps, but a boatload of men was expected to arrive during the morning and they would help to unload the stores so the ship could make a quick turn round.

BY BARBARA HINDS  
Halifax journalist  
with photographs by  
ROSEMARY GILLIAT

The lower deck suddenly became hectic with activity, tarpaulins were unchocked and rolled up, hatch covers drawn away and the first load of coal bags was transferred to the ship's flat-bottomed barge lying alongside. A few shore-bound passengers scrambled on to the coal sacks and the ship's motorboat chugged for shore against a raw wind and a rising tide. The waiting Eskimos were friendly, smiling and barely suppressing their excitement. They held outstretched, ungloved hands in firm clasps during a formal exchange of "Good morning" and "A'ee."

The Eskimo in charge of the shore unloading party was a bespectacled, serious gentleman named Kilabuk who had worked for "The Bay" for many years. (This year, Kilabuk, who enjoys the comforts of an electrically lit house and store food, receives an award for forty years of faithful service.) He looked more like a studious Victorian librarian than a Hudson's Bay clerk and assistant, and he was proudly in charge of a newly installed 'railway' that ran about twenty yards on the cliff. Kilabuk directed operation of the small engine and the single flat-car which had been brought in by the H B C in 1959 to haul cargo up and down the steep cliff. Uphill, it carried sacks of flour, dry goods, coal, and a host of commodities; downhill, it carried whale oil, sealskins, and about six Eskimos—clinging on for the ride.





Close beside Kilabuk's new love, the miniature railway, and standing beneath the streaming ensign, was a small ebony-black cannon mounted on a freshly painted green gun carriage. It was Kilabuk's old love. In his formal English, he explained that the gun was usually fired at the exact moment the tip of an incoming ship's anchor hit the water, and again when the ship departed. "But," said Kilabuk apologetically, "we had no gunpowder left in the magazine when you arrived and I couldn't fire it." He was evidently disappointed, for Kilabuk seemed to be a stickler for tradition and firing the cannon had been his privilege for a long time.

The 200-year-old cannon had originally been mounted on an old whaling ship, according to local report, and it was first put ashore at Blacklead Island on the western shore of Cumberland Sound. When the whaling station closed down, the cannon was taken to Pangnirtung. Kilabuk, who was born on Blacklead Island, recalled it

being moved across on a komatik. Although it was so old and much used, it was still in prime firing condition—if only he could find some gunpowder to prove it, Kilabuk said. After nearly forty years of H B C tradition, he was not a man to be easily thwarted, so he promised that before the *Rupertsland* left for the last time he would find some gunpowder, somehow.

It was not only pride, but sentiment too, that sent Kilabuk off in pursuit of shot or shell. He was nearing retirement and it was fitting that he should fire a last salute for the *Rupertsland's* last arctic voyage . . . and with an intent expression behind his horn-rimmed spectacles, he set off behind the white-walled warehouse towards the Eskimos' low winter tents. He returned half an hour later grinning broadly with a brown paper bag in one hand and a garden rake over his shoulder. A scrap of someone's old pink dress dangled from the pocket of his khaki parka. He had gleaned the last remains of gun-



*Kilabuk holds the bag of gunpowder,  
ready to charge his cannon*

*The charge is gently pushed home  
with the handle of a garden rake*

*The Rupertsland receives her salute*



powder from the hunters. "It was left over from the days when we made our own bullets," he said. "Some of it is twenty years old."

A crowd of Eskimo children, a few adults and a lot of dogs gathered behind the cannon to watch Kilabuk prepare for the salvo which was directed over the edge of the cliff and in the direction of the bows of the *Rupertsland*. He first extracted a shaped wooden bung from the cannon's mouth, and dusted inside the barrel, then he gently stuffed the brown paper bag of gunpowder down the muzzle and packed it gingerly with the long handle of the garden rake, his improvised packing rod.

Kilabuk looked very cheerful and murmured, "Yes Ma'am, I fire this gun on arrival and departure of all big ships." (About two ships a year go to Pang.) "When the anchor touches the water, I let her GO." And he gave another jab down the barrel with the garden rake. Then he pulled the duster from his parka pocket and prodded that in on top of the gunpowder, and moved round to the business end of the cannon. From a colourful, vintage

tin of "Black Sporting Powder" he shook a charge of powder down the priming hole that is bored through the top of the stubby barrel, and then he poked a matchstick, head first down the tube of the hinged striker. When the hinged striker was tipped forward, the match head came to rest over the priming hole. But to separate the match head from the priming powder, Kilabuk inserted a small metal plate measuring about three inches by one and a half inches, covered with sandpaper. He had made the device himself and it was his own version of a striker. When pulled across the head of the match his striker would ignite it in the same fashion as a matchbox; this would fire the priming powder which would explode down the priming hole and then fire off the charge of gunpowder.

At one time, Kilabuk said, he used to strike the match himself on the barrel of the cannon, then step back! But age had mellowed his courtship with danger and he now kept a long piece of string attached to the metal striker—like an artilleryman's lanyard. As the cannon had not been fired for two years, Kilabuk tied another three

feet of string to it, warned everyone to stand clear of the gun, pressed one hand to his ear, and heaved with the other on the string.

The roar clattered through the valleys. A cloud of white smoke burst from the cannon, a flash of orange flame licked out, and there was a terrible smell of burning sulphur. The mossy cliff top burst into half a dozen minor fires as the shredded pink duster settled down and smouldered among the oil drums and sacks of coal. A stampede of Eskimo children joyfully jumped on the burning fragments until not even a curl of smoke remained in the crisp still air.

Kilabuk moved forward, peered down the barrel to see if anything still remained inside, and then with a seemingly reluctant air, he picked up the wooden bung and put it back in the cannon's mouth. "We had a great surprise one time," he said. "There was a liddle pup. He caught hold of the end of the string when I wasn't looking and he ran off with it and we all got the big surprise."

The *Rupertsland* had received her salute. Kilabuk strolled over to the store. The stove needed lighting, and he took a big box of matches from his pocket and struck one. He held it at arm's length for a moment, grinned, and bent down to set light to the fire. ♦



# THE MUTE GHOSTS OF CAPE MUDGE



BY E. F. MEADE

Mr Meade, a free-lance writer, founded the Campbell River Historical Museum of which he is the curator

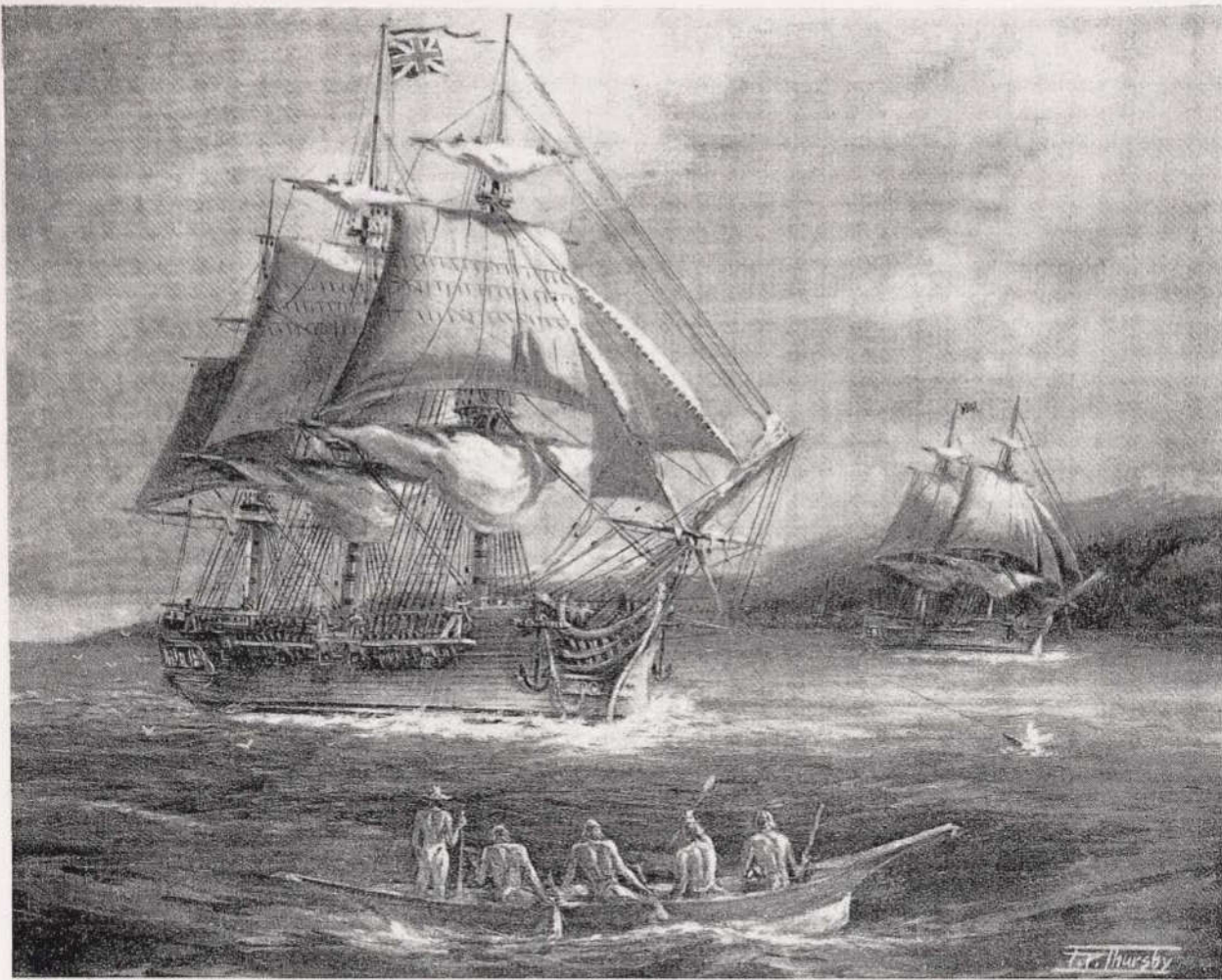
FOR MORE than a century Cape Mudge has been famous as a mariner's graveyard. Well deserved is the wide ill-fame of this cape on the southern tip of Quadra, one of the cluster of islands between the British Columbia coast and Vancouver Island. As a place of dread, it ranks with Cape Flattery and the Columbia River Bars. Gale winds and swirling tides around the cape have claimed dozens of ships, and even in fine weather its shoaling waters command caution.

That it is also one of the most historic spots on the coast is much less known.

It was here, on a bright July day in the year 1792, that Captain Vancouver brought his two ships the *Discovery* and the *Chatham* round the Cape and anchored just inside Discovery Passage at a spot approximately off the present lighthouse. The Indians from the old village on top of the cape came out to the ships with fish and wild fruits, which they exchanged for European articles of trade.

Captain Vancouver's detailed description of his visit to this village constitutes the first historic record of this area:

"After dinner, accompanied by Mr Menzies and some of the officers, I went ashore to return the visit of our friends, and to indulge our curiosity. On landing at the village, which is situated a little to the N. W. within the promontory, and nearly at the summit of a steep sandy cliff, we were received by a man who appeared to be the chief of the party. He approached us alone, seemingly with a degree of formality, though with the utmost confidence of his own security, while the rest of the society, apparently numerous, were arranged and seated in the most peaceable manner before their houses. I made him such presents as seemed not only to please him excessively, but to confirm him in the good opinion with which he was prepossessed, and he immediately conducted us up to the village by a very narrow path winding diagonally up the cliff, estimated by us to be about a hundred feet in height, and within a few degrees of being perpendicular. Close to the edge of this precipice stood the village, the houses of which were built after the fashion of Nootka, though smaller, not exceeding ten or twelve feet in height, nearly close together in rows, separated by a narrow passage sufficiently wide for one person. On the beach, at the foot of the cliff, were about seventy canoes of small dimensions, though amongst them were some that would carry at least fifteen persons with great convenience. On a computation, therefore, deduced from these and other circumstances, we were led to consider that this village, though occupying a very small space, could not contain less than three hundred persons. The spot where it was erected appeared to be well chosen to



*Indians in their dugout canoe see Captain Vancouver's ships H.M.S. Discovery and Chatham.  
From a painting by F. P. Thursby, courtesy Vancouver City Archives*

insure its protection. . . . Having gratified our curiosity, and in return for the cordial attention of these friendly people, made our acknowledgements by presents of such trivial articles as we had about us, we took our leave of the village for the purpose of indulging ourselves before dark, with a refreshing walk, on the low margin of land extending from the more elevated woodland country, some distance along the water-side to the northward. . . ."

It was Archibald Menzies, doctor and botanist on Vancouver's expedition, who determined that the Indians then living in the village on top of Cape Mudge belonged to the Salishan language group. From recent investigations, we now know that these Salishan people at one time occupied the whole of the coast from the Columbia

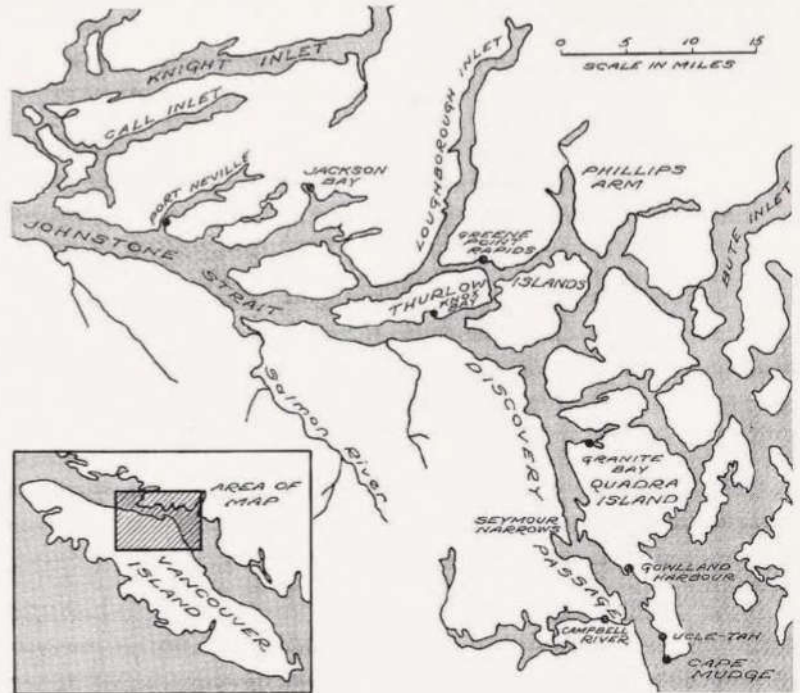
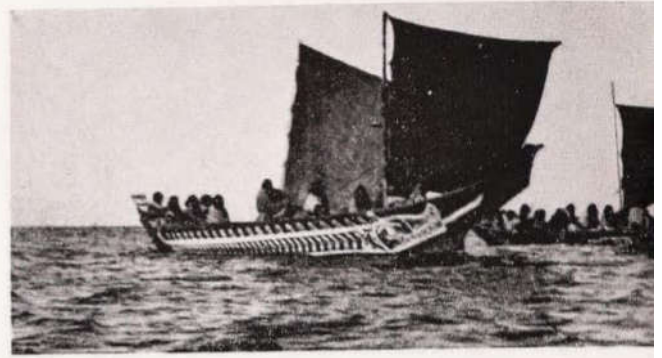
River as far north as Call Inlet, above present Port Neville.

On the whole of the Pacific Coast there are few places to which we can point with certainty and say that Captain Vancouver walked there. At Cape Mudge, if we walk along the shore meadow between the lighthouse and the cape promontory, we know that we are treading in the steps of the great discoverer. Vancouver named the Cape after Zachary Mudge, one of his lieutenants, who later rose to admiral's rank in the Royal Navy. It was Mudge who first sighted the Cape after climbing to Nipple Summit, above Teakerne Arm on Redonda Island.

On the site of the old Salish village on the cape, there stands a great stone, smooth and sloping on one side,



*Kwakiutl personage in ceremonial regalia, button blanket, bark headdress and neck ring, with staff and rattle. Curtis photo c. 1890 B. C. Archives*



beneath which, it is said, the last great chief of the cape Indians lies buried. Little credence can be given to this rumour, since the Indians of that time were not known to make subterranean burials. But certainly this great sloping stone bears evidence of having been used as a playslide by centuries of village children.

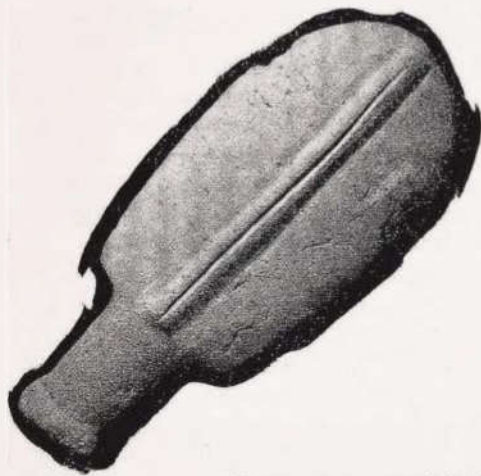
Nothing remains of the old village, yet we know it must once have been a happy place, for it bore the name of Tsqulotn, a word of Salishan origin meaning "playing field." It was but one of many Salish villages in the area, but it was probably the bastion or citadel of the local people, who at one time must have been very numerous.

Campbell River was the chief source of their staple food, salmon, though the cod banks off Cape Mudge certainly contributed in a large measure to their food supply.

Following Vancouver's discovery in 1792, great changes occurred in the area of Discovery Passage and Johnstone Strait. From out of the north came the war canoes of the Lekwiltok, a branch of the Kwakiutl nation. We do not know what set these northerners upon their terrifying raids of territorial expansion. Some say it was a newly-gained superiority of firearms, acquired from white traders in the north, though there are many indications that a southward movement of the Kwakiutl had begun long before the arrival of the first white man. The Lekwiltok expansion into Discovery Passage may indeed have been only one, and perhaps the final phase, of a vast movement of the whole Kwakiutl nation.



*Large war canoes of the Kwakiutl Indians proceeding under sail  
Curtis photo, UBC*



*A rare stone war club from Campbell River, now in Campbell River Museum*

Whatever the initial cause, between the years 1792 and 1850, the Lekwiltok, moving out of their base at Jackson Bay, struck at the Salish outpost villages at Salmon River\*, Port Neville and Knox Bay. Moving still southward, they captured Granite Bay, and in the dead of night raided and burnt the village in Gowlland Harbour, annihilating the population there. Within a few years they penetrated the mouth of the Campbell River and captured the ancient village built on piles on the slough island. Here they apparently wiped out the male population, and took the women and children slaves.

Now the Lekwiltok conquerors commanded all of Johnstone Straits and Discovery Passage, as the Salish people had before them. Only the old village atop Cape Mudge appears to have withstood them, and for some reason, the northerners stayed their hand against it. Was

\*See H'Kusam, *Beaver*, Winter 1961.



*A Kwakiutl woman. Different types of weaving are seen in hat, baskets, and mat  
B.C. Archives*

its position so defensible that it could not be taken? We do know that it was well protected by nature, with a sheer cliff at its front, and backed by a rocky ravine and a dense growth of blackthorn. It would have been a hard village to storm, particularly so if the Lekwiltok had used their night raiding tactics against it.

Having taken the Campbell River slough pile village, the northerners occupied it, and dominated one of the finest salmon streams on the coast. In one stroke, as it were, they had assured themselves an ample food supply, while at the same time cutting off the main fish source of the Salish remnants in the area. Cape Mudge must have become an almost beleaguered citadel.

Within four or five years of occupying the Campbell River, the Lekwiltok had again moved, this time across Discovery Passage. On Quadra Island, just north of the present lighthouse, they built a stockaded village, or they occupied one built by the Salish. This new village soon became known as Ucle-tah, and is still occupied by their descendants.

So, with the Lekwiltok established almost on its doorstep, the old village on the Cape gave up its life and quickly fell into decay. The remnants of the once powerful and numerous Comox band who had lived there for



*Coast Salish woman, about 1890*

*Curtis, UBC*

centuries escaped southward and joined their Salish kin in Comox Harbour, and there their descendants are to be found to this day.

Somewhere between 1840 and 1850 two other groups of Lekwiltok Indians moved into the Campbell River area. They were close cousins and allies of the original Jackson Bay band of conquerors. They came out of Greene Point Rapids and Phillips Arm. Never quite as aggressive or warlike as the Jackson Bay people, these latecomers settled on the Campbell River spit which had, presumably, been occupied previously only as a summer fishing site. Here they established themselves, and before long mixed freely with their Jackson Bay kinsmen who had, by then, moved to their Ucle-tah village on Quadra Island. The old pile village in the Campbell River slough was abandoned. Its piles and platform houses soon fell into decay, and the slough mud and marsh growth quickly covered all traces of them. All that remains of this original village are a few artifacts preserved in the local museum. Klamahto, the name of that old village, has survived as the adopted name of the present Campbell River Spit Band.

But now the year 1850 had dawned. The Comox Salish had vanished from the area. The Lekwiltok commanded

Discovery Passage from their two villages. And "command" the passage they certainly did. The fierce Haidas of the Queen Charlottes, travelling down to the Hudson Bay trading post at Victoria, paid toll to the Ucle-taws of Cape Mudge. Bella Coolas and Tsimshians—all who tried to pass through Discovery Passage—met death and slavery from the Lekwiltok canoes that sallied out to meet them. It was for good reason that all Indians on the coast came to call Cape Mudge the "death-hole," and the expression did not refer to the cape weather or tides. Travel past Cape Mudge could only be undertaken by stealthy passage in the dark of night.

All contemporary records speak of the fierce and warlike nature of the Lekwiltok. Thomas Crosby, Methodist missionary on the Coast, wrote that "Cape Mudge was not only noted for its stormy weather, but for its fierce and bloodthirsty people. The Cape Mudge, or Yuk-wil-tow, people lived there. The people of the whole northern coast, after they got through Yuk-wil-toe Narrows [Seymour Narrows] or past Cape Mudge, felt themselves comparatively safe as they had passed what they called the 'death hole'."

Another record describes these people: "In the early days they had a bad reputation on account of their

*Kwakwaka'wakw man, about 1890*

*Curtis, UBC*





*Mortuary figures marking the entrance to Cape Mudge graveyard, photographed by Dr C. F. Newcombe. The figure on the right was later given to the Campbell River Museum (see contents page)*  
*B. C. Provincial Museum*

piracies. They were a warlike people and preyed so consistently on traders that the Northern Nations on their way to Victoria would paddle through the far channels rather than pass the Cape."

Still another contemporary authority, Lieut R. C. Mayne, R.N. (1862), states: "Next . . . come the Ucle-tahs. The most important village of this tribe is situated at Cape Mudge, but they are spread all over Discovery Passage and the south part of Johnstone Strait. As I have before said, they may be regarded as the Ishmaelites of the coast, their hand being literally against every one's, and every one's against them. . . . Several battles have taken place at different times at or near Cape Mudge. Upon one occasion they murdered nearly all the crew of a Hudson Bay vessel which stopped there for water, one half-breed boy only, I believe, escaping. They are bold as well as blood-thirsty, and by no means disposed to yield, as Indians generally do, to the mere exhibition of force."

More than once the gunboats had to bring reprisal to the Cape Mudge village. Mayne records an instance: "The U-cle-ta are great offenders. . . . In the summer of 1860 a lesson was administered to them which . . . may do them some good. A party of them had attacked and robbed some Chinamen, and escaped to their village at Cape Mudge, which, being stockaded for protection against other tribes, they no doubt thought would be equally efficacious against white men. H. M. gunboat 'Forward' was sent there to demand restitution; and, on approaching the village, she was fired upon from the stockade with loud shouts of defiance. The gunboat first fired a shell or two over; but, Indian-like, they mistook

this leniency for inability to hit them, and coming out in front of the stockade fired several volleys at her, which fortunately fell harmless against her rifleplates. She then opened fire upon their canoes on the beach, and lastly upon the stockade; and it was not till several men were killed that they came to terms, and restored the stolen property."

Nor were the warlike activities of these people confined to Discovery Passage and Johnstone Strait. They trained only their strongest and ablest young men for canoe crews. They owned the finest and swiftest canoes. With only a small supply of dried food and water, they sallied forth to raid the farthest reaches of the Gulf of Georgia. They raided into Puget Sound. Twice they attacked Fort Langley; on the last occasion, in a frontal attack, they were almost annihilated by the fort's cannon.

But gradually white settlement spread on the coast. The trader gave place to the settler and the logger. Esquimalt, as a naval base, became the bastion of the North Pacific, and gunboats became an everyday sight.

Yet it is doubtful if the presence of gunboats alone made the Cape Mudge Lekwiltok put away their arms and their warlike proclivities. In the six or seven decades since they had struck out from their Jackson Bay homeland, a new age had come to the coast. It is a tribute to the remarkable intelligence of these people that they recognized the turn of events in this new era, and changed to meet it. This factor, plus an unusual capacity to recognize and choose strong and continuing leadership, has brought these people to their present high standard of life—a standard almost unique among the coast Indian groups. ♦

*A tottery white-  
tail fawn, half  
an hour old*



## WHITE-TAILED DEER

*pictures and text by*  
**LEONARD LEE RUE III**

**I**N 1534 Jacques Cartier, heading a French exploratory expedition, sailed into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The next year he sailed up the river until he reached the Lachine rapids at the spot where Montreal now stands. In his journals he writes of the quantities of large stags and deer (*cerfs* and *daims*). Deer in eastern Canada were the elk (*wapiti*), moose, and the whitetail. In early days the white-tailed deer was called North American deer, fallow deer, or roebuck, from its resemblance to European deer. Cartier's is probably the first written record of white-tailed deer in Canada.

Champlain in 1603 writes of seeing moose (*orignas*), stags (*cerfs*, possibly *wapiti*), and deer (*dains*) in the country up the St. Lawrence. Later he describes methods employed by the Indians in hunting deer that he saw in the autumn of 1615 in the Rice Lake area north of Lake Ontario. Several hundred Indians would form a line and, making a lot of noise, would drive the animals on to a promontory jutting into the water. The deer were then shot with arrows as they tried to run through the drivers' line or speared in the water by Indians waiting in canoes for them. They also used snares and pit traps. Another method was the construction of a huge funnel-shaped trap, of which Champlain made a drawing. Each wing of

*Doe and fawns. The tail with the long  
white fringe is all white underneath*

*One-week-old fawn  
nestles at the foot of a tree*





*White-tailed  
buck leaps away  
with long bounds*



*The fawn with this doe has shed its  
spotted coat, a change made three or  
four months after birth.*

*Opposite: Doe feeding.  
Deer are ruminants and settle down  
to chew the cud after browsing*

*A button buck, showing the knob that will  
develop into an antler. The metatarsal gland  
on the outside of the hind leg is noticeable*





the trap was nearly 1,500 paces long and was made of wooden stakes eight to nine feet high set close together. This must have been a tremendous undertaking, but Champlain notes that the Indians completed it in less than ten days. The men then noisily drove the deer into the trap and shot them with arrows. Such a drive was made every second day and in the thirty-eight days Champlain was there, 120 deer were taken.

The abundance of deer is also commented upon by the Jesuit explorer and historian Charlevoix. Writing from New France in 1721 he said: "When we [the French] discovered this vast Continent it was full of Deer and other Beasts of the Chase . . . The most common Quadrupede at this Time in *Canada*, is the Roe-Buck, which differs in nothing from our's . . . The Savages hunt them but seldom."

The whitetails were hunted for food, their fat was used like butter, and their hides, bones and sinews were used for shelter, clothing, tools and weapons. Some Indians preferred moose hide to buckskin because of its greater durability and protection. Deerskins were used for lodge coverings but bark—birch, cedar, ash, or elm—was usually preferred where it was readily available. Deerskins were an important item of trade in eastern Canada, the 1786 records showing that Quebec exported 132,271 deerskins, of which 126,794 skins were sold with the hair on at a value of £25,358.

White-tailed deer are increasing in Canada today and will probably continue to do so. The deer is a forest fringe animal living on the edge of woods and round settlements rather than in the virgin forest. Each year sees thousands of acres of land cut over for pulpwood or opened up and the subsequent brush areas provides ideal browse for the deer. Moreover, as civilization advances, the predators such as the wolf, lynx and cougar are constantly being forced back. For the past thirteen summers I have travelled extensively along the waterways of the upper Ottawa River. This was virgin territory at first and the sign of predators abounded. Today much of the forest has gone and so have most of the predators. White birch, aspen, and some maple, all good deer foods, have reseeded most of the area and deer are occasionally being seen where none were seen before.

The proper name of the white-tailed deer is *Odocoileus virginianus*. Three species are found in Canada, their range extending across the mainland. *Odocoileus virginianus borealis* is the largest of the subspecies and by far the most common, ranging from Nova Scotia to Manitoba. *Odocoileus virginianus dacotensis* is found in the three prairie provinces. Most authorities agree that prior to 1882 Manitoba had no white-tailed deer, whereas it

now has representatives of these two subspecies. The original mule deer, formerly numerous in the area, have been gradually eliminated by man-made changes to which the whitetail adapts. It has flourished and some areas are already overpopulated. The third subspecies, *O.v. ochrourus*, is found in Alberta and British Columbia, though here the black-tailed deer predominates.

Estimates of the white-tailed deer population in Canada in 1952 varied but it would seem that there were then well over one million animals.

Whitetail fawns are born in the latter part of May and June, after a gestation period of 200 to 210 days. A doe giving birth for the first time will probably have a single fawn but, if food and conditions are right, she will in following years produce twins until rendered barren by



*Velvet covered antlers starting to grow on a buck whose crinkle-haired winter coat has not yet moulted*

old age. Sometimes triplets are born and occasionally quadruplets, and there are at least three records of quintuplets. The fawns at birth average about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  pounds for a female and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  pounds for a male. They soon start nursing and within an hour are able to stand. The doe meanwhile constantly licks the fawns to clean and dry them and remove any odour-bearing blood that may soil their coats. The consumption of the afterbirth by the doe has a twofold purpose: to conceal the birth from predators and to help stimulate lactation in the doe.

As soon as possible the doe leads her fawns from the place of birth to a spot where they can be hidden. The spotted coat of the fawns is one of nature's masterpieces of camouflage rendering them almost invisible. Very young fawns are said to be practically odourless. It is during this time that the doe will stay away from the fawns as much as possible, except to nurse them five to six times daily, in an attempt to keep her body odour from giving away the fawn's location. Within a month's time the young fawns follow after the mother wherever she goes. They will stay with her until the following spring when she will drive them away or lose them before she raises her next family.

The bucks meanwhile are established in bachelor quarters throughout the woods. In spring each buck grows a new set of antlers. The antlers are bones formed on the outside of the body and they are nurtured by a network of bloodvessels in a soft covering skin that resembles velvet cloth. During formation the antlers, which are hot to the touch, are soft and easily damaged; they are one of the fastest growing forms of animal tissue known. It is not possible to tell the age of a buck by his antlers

*Spike buck browsing on twigs. In the thick winter coat the under-fur is covered with longer hairs than the summer coat*





*Splayed toes of a young deer support it on the snow*



*Sleek white-tailed doe seeks winter browse on bushes and shrubs*



*Antlers have hardened by September and in October or November bucks become belligerent and fight each other*

because any buck given the proper amount of nutritious foods will produce large, many-tined antlers. A fully mature buck on an inadequate diet will have small undeveloped antlers. The only accurate way to tell a deer's age is by examining the character of the teeth.

A buck's antlers will start to develop in April and will continue until September. At this time the blood vessels dry up and the buck removes the velvet covering from

his antlers by rubbing them against small saplings and bushes. The velvet may be removed overnight or it may take a week.

With the coming of fall the deer lose their reddish-brown summer coats and replace them with longer hollow-haired coats of grey. The fawns lose their spots because camouflage is no longer needed; they can now outrun most of their enemies.



*The antlers of the whitetail buck characteristically have one beam with a series of points; in other deer the beam branches*

*This spike buck in a winter yarding area nervously stamps his foot*

At the approach of the rutting or breeding season (the latter part of October and November), the bucks become very belligerent and may at this time even attack a man. Their necks swell and their polished antlers gleam like knives as each buck searches for a receptive doe. Many are the battles between the rival males. Sometimes the duelling males are dealt a cruel blow by nature when the bucks charge each other with such impact that their antlers are inextricably locked together so that they are both doomed to a slow death by thirst and starvation.

When the breeding season is over the bucks lose their antlers which are used aggressively only during the rut. Deer do most of their fighting by making lightning-fast slashes with their front feet.

Throughout the year whitetails occupy a very restricted home range. They live in a matriarchal society, led by an old doe. Each small group of deer is usually a family unit composed of an older doe, her offspring and perhaps their offspring. Even when a buck accompanies the group he still looks to the doe to lead the way as she will be more intimately acquainted with her individual territory than he would be.

The coming of deep snow and cold weather changes this family grouping when deer are forced from their own territories to seek sheltered places where large numbers may "yard." In these yarding areas the deer trample out a network of trails leading to all available food. This is the time of real hardship for the deer. The limiting natural factor to deer numbers anywhere is the amount of nutritious food available in the wintertime. ♦



# RED RIVER ON THE EVE OF CHANGE

## 1857 to 1859

By W. L. MORTON

THE colony on Red River, in that part of Rupert's Land where Winnipeg now stands, had fully developed its peculiar way of life by 1857. It was a colony, like that of New France before 1700, entirely devoted to the support of the fur trade. Its men laboured in boat brigade or cart train. Its fields supplied the fur trade. Those who could find no employment with the Hudson's Bay Company or private contractor turned to the boat or the free trade in furs. Thus everything that was peculiar in the colony's way of life, the riverside farms, the buffalo hunt, the summer transport of supplies by York boat or cart, was to be traced to the fact that Red River lived by collecting and exporting furs.

Yet, even at its climax of development, nothing was more unstable, more quickly changing, more provisional, than the Red River way of life. It was simply a way of dealing with a particular environment. Of those who dwelt in Red River perhaps only the Métis were sufficiently content to think it a way of life that one might hope would continue forever. Every one else, even the retired fur traders who built the great, solid stone houses in St Andrews, expected the regime of the fur trade to give way to some new state of affairs. And in 1857-59 every one was conscious that change was near. The signs were evident. Sheriff Alexander Ross's new reaper from St Paul was a concrete testimony that Red River was moving with the outside world.

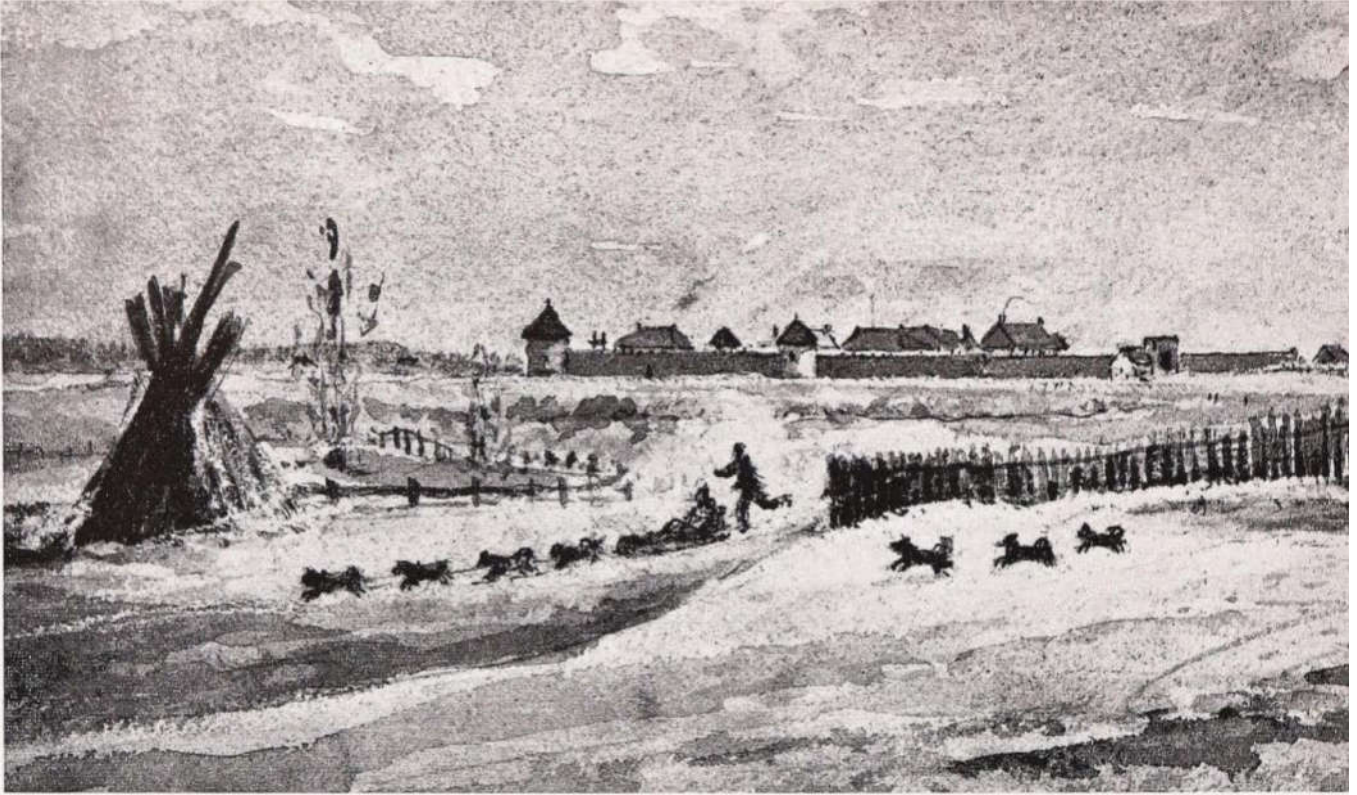
What brought the expectation of change to a head in 1857-59, however, was the fact that the Hudson's Bay Company's licence to the exclusive trade of the North West was to expire, unless renewed, in May 1859. Closely allied to this question was another, the internal business of the Company, whether the Company could continue to operate at a profit in the face of the growth of the private trade in furs since the Sayer trial in 1849, when the free-trader was found guilty and released without

penalty. That trial had made it plain that the Company could not use its authority as the government of the North West to uphold its monopoly of all trade in the country. The result, of course, was a considerable growth of "free" trading, checked only by the competitive power of the Company. The great question of 1857, then, was should the Company plan to continue its operation as a practical monopoly in all the North West outside the Fraser River and Red River districts, or should it sell out before the Andrew McDermots, the W. G. Fonsecas and the Norman W. Kittsons of the free trade?

The question could not be answered merely in terms of profit and loss. The Company was not only a commercial corporation; it was also a government and until relieved of its governmental responsibilities, whether by the United Kingdom or Canada, it had to consider not only profit and loss, but also law and order. For the outcome of the Sayer trial had not really relieved the Company of its twofold and incompatible responsibility of protecting the interests of its shareholders and of upholding law and order in its territories.

The greatest threat to the ability of the Company to continue both to earn a profit and to maintain peace in the North West was not the free trade conducted by private traders in Red River. That could be annoying, but it could be contained, partly by competition, partly by buying up the furs of the private traders. The great danger was that of a free trade conducted from south of the border. In competition with such a trade the Company stood to lose the advantages of its size, organization, and authority which made it so formidable in its own territory. Its rivals could operate from sanctuary, so to speak, and release in Red River a contingent of free traders and Métis who would overrun the Red River and Saskatchewan districts with a speed drawn from familiarity and many family relationships. A military post was

*Head of the history department at the University of Manitoba, Professor Morton is the author of numerous articles and books, his "Manitoba—a History" being published in 1957. Dr Morton is the head designate of the new establishment, probably to be called University College, being set up at the University of Manitoba*



*McDermot's from Bannatyne's house in 1857 with Fort Garry in the background showing the east and north walls. Fro*

to be feared, then, not as a base for armed aggression but as a nucleus around which American traders and Métis would cluster and from which they would overrun the Company's territory, without the Company having the means to confine their activities within the bounds of law and order.

Since 1849 the free trade, it is true, had grown, and people of the Settlement had come to engage in it regularly. But the Company had held its own, and in 1854 Norman Kittson had withdrawn from Pembina, although he continued to operate from St Paul. A confined and relatively tame free trade seemed to be the result. Moreover, the aftermath of the 1849 trouble was dealt with slowly. The Métis under the elder Riel had demanded then not only freedom to trade, but the removal of Recorder Adam Thom from the bench, the use of French in the courts, and the appointment of French representatives to the Council of Assiniboia. Thom ceased to sit after the Sayer trial and in 1854 returned to Scotland. French was introduced into examinations in the Quarterly Court and juries, like that in the trial of Sayer, were mixed when litigants were French. But only one French representative, at first Father Laflèche, had been added to the Council, and the addition was soon cancelled by the death of the Métis Cuthbert Grant. This remained a grievance but was ended after 1856 when F. S. Johnson, of Lower Canada, succeeded Major W. B. Caldwell as Governor. Thereafter the French were represented by a number of their most important men, and the Métis community dropped the role of critics of the Company's regime to take up that of allies.

This, however, was a change barely begun when in October of 1856 Chief Factor John Swanston (in charge of Fort Garry at Red River) reported to London that the commander of American troops had notified him that the Métis were no longer to run buffalo south of the line. One purpose of the visit of the troops was to report where a military post might be built. Such a post was desired by the St Paul traders because it would help their trade and strengthen their hand with both the Indians and the Red River Métis, drawing many of the latter south of the line. The prohibition of buffalo-running from Company territory would re-enforce the pull of a post. The result would be a free trader's base on American soil, an outcome the Company had good reason to fear.

Small wonder then that HBC Governor Shepherd in London and Sir George Simpson in Canada both appealed to the authorities for troops. The ground put forward was the threat to the allegiance of the people of the North West an American military post would constitute, and the manner in which it would aggravate the Company's task of maintaining peace in Red River. There cannot be the slightest doubt that this would have been the result of a military post at Pembina, and that the St Paul traders intended it should be the result. The growing attachment of the Métis to the Company rule was not yet strong enough in 1857 to make, as it did after 1862, an American military post at Pembina of little political or commercial significance.

Thus it was that a detachment of the Royal Canadian Rifles came to be despatched to Red River in 1857. Simpson found another reason for needing troops when



water-colour by W. H. E. Napier in the Manitoba Archives

he learnt that a Canadian party was about to start an agitation in Red River against the Company's government. But, again, his concern was not that the Canadians sought to trade with the North West, but that they proposed to begin with an agitation against the Company's authority which might lead to a rising of the Métis and another defiance of authority such as the Sayer trial. His concern over this prospect cannot be brushed aside as merely a fear that the Company's dividends would suffer, although there is no reason to suppose that hard-headed Sir George welcomed competitors more ardently than any other business man.

The Canadian competitors were not indeed mere business rivals. They took the Company's monopoly at its face value and proposed to remove it by attacking the Company's whole position both as governors and as traders. In this they acted as Canadians had done since the days of the Nor'Westers, and indeed of the French traders. They simply denied the validity of the Company's title to the land. The core of this Canadian party was made up of old Nor'Wester and former Company people who had left the service disgruntled with its rigour and who remembered the profits of the fur trade with longing. The Canadian leader was Allan Macdonell of the family of Miles and Alexander Macdonell who had figured so prominently in the disputes between Lord Selkirk and the North West Company. In England Macdonell and his associates had an ally in Alexander Kennedy Isbister, the gifted native of the North West who was now a successful schoolmaster in London.

These malcontents now found powerful allies in Upper

Canada in the Chamber of Commerce of Toronto and in George Brown, editor of *The Globe* and leader of the Upper Canadian Reformers in the Legislature of United Canada. Toronto businessmen decided they might try to capture the trade of the North West, now increasingly flowing to St Paul, and perhaps build a railway to Red River as one stage towards the Pacific. George Brown saw in the annexation of the North West an Upper Canadian manifest destiny which would make representation by population a certainty and ensure the domination of British Protestantism in Canada. The one obstacle to the realization of the commercial and the political vision was, apart from distance, the Hudson's Bay Company.

This combination of old fur traders, Toronto businessmen and Grit politicians decided to remove that obstacle by initiating a "popular" agitation in Red River against the Company's role and for union with Canada. The object was proper enough. It is difficult now, however, to comprehend the rancour with which the Company was attacked. The reason was not only the nineteenth century's ready hatred of monopoly and privilege; it was also the fact that Simpson and the Company were a power in Canadian politics, one of the first of those great Montreal interests which have been thought to have influenced Canadian governments unduly. Simpson was, of course, alertly active to defend the Company's interests from attack, and to keep Government well disposed. And Lower Canadian, i.e. French, opinion favoured his efforts in that they tended to see the North West as merely an overwhelming addition to Upper Canada. The result was, of course, that the Company and its monopoly became one of the bitterest issues of a period of extremely bitter partisan politics in Canada.

Such was some of the background which influenced the course of events in Red River in 1857-59. And to the strong Upper Canadian agitation for annexation, was added a British Parliamentary inquiry into the desirability of renewing the Company's licence to trade, and a rapidly growing interest in St Paul not only in the commerce of the British North West, but also of its potential railway routes to the Pacific. One agent from that background was "Captain" William Kennedy (A. K. Isbister's nephew and ex-Company clerk) sent by the provisionally organized North West Trading Company to induce the Red River people to petition for union with Canada. His winter journey ended when he reached Red River on 27 February 1857.

Red River, or elements in it, was not unready to receive him. The break in connections between Canada and the North West or Rupert's Land after 1821 has been somewhat exaggerated. In particular, there were



A. G. B. Bannatyne and his wife, daughter of Andrew McDermot, in front of their Red River house in 1858  
H. L. Hime

the former servants and officers of the Company retired in Canada, like John McLean of *Twenty-five Years Service*, and the Presbyterian community which since 1851 had a bond with Canada in its pastor, the Rev. John Black. On 28 February Kennedy called on Donald Gunn, the correspondent of the Smithsonian Institution, a subscriber to *The Globe* and, since the death of Alexander Ross in 1856, the leading member of the Presbyterian community. Kennedy soon persuaded Gunn, a critic of the Company since his early retirement from its service, to assist him in his mission. Gunn drafted a petition asking union with Canada for submission to the Canadian and Imperial Governments.

Kennedy now proceeded to conduct a spirited agitation in the English speaking sections of the colony. He denounced the Company, urged union with Canada, and stated that a company had been formed in Toronto to build a railway to the North West. He circulated the petition. These points he made at a series of public meetings, which were so successful that Governor of Assiniboia F. G. Johnson felt obliged to attend them and speak, as he did most ineffectually, against Kennedy. There were those who, like the Rev. John Black, deplored the attack on the Company as unfair and unnecessary, and indeed as harmful to Kennedy's cause, but even they agreed that the proposal for union with Canada was a legitimate one and its accomplishment desirable. Kennedy in fact had a very fair measure of success, and Black wrote to James Ross, who was studying at Knox College, that from 500 to 600 people had signed the petition. These signatures Kennedy was to take back to Canada with him.

With them he was in fact to carry two sets of resolutions protesting the truth and tenor of the evidence Simpson and John Rae had given in London before the Select Committee of the House of Commons in February and March, 1857. The resolutions were passed at public meetings held on May 26th and June 9th, and were later published at length in *The Globe*. Thus the agitation was even more extensive than Kennedy could have made it.

Armed with the petition and resolutions Kennedy left Red River on 15 June for Toronto, where he was to be

welcomed by those who had commissioned him. On 16 June Sir George Simpson arrived at Fort Garry with some of the officers of the Royal Canadian Rifles. That Kennedy should have left on the eve of the Governor's arrival was probably a matter of chance, but that arrival signalized the quieting of the agitation. It had not, of course, been extreme; the public meetings and the petition could hardly be objected to in any British community. Above all, the Métis had shown no overt interest, and had remained quiet. Added to these political circumstances were certain economic ones. The promise of a railway had caused a boom in farm prices and land values. Cattle increased 50 per cent in value; land titles, long negligently kept, became a matter of concern; farmers held back their wheat from market. With the summer came the Canadian exploring expedition and that of Captain Palliser, both bringing an unexpected flow of cash into the settlement. This was to be increased even more when, as in 1846, the troops provided a welcome addition of free-spending customers to the private traders. It seemed that the long stagnation of Red River life might be ending, and such economic growth would have ended political excitement, even if it would also have strengthened the desire for union with Canada.

The agitation did not die down, however. The Canadian expansionists of Toronto saw to that, and they were to find a clever advocate of their cause in James Ross, who was to return to Red River in 1858. Even before that, however, an incident occurred which momentarily aroused the fears the free traders still entertained of the Company's monopoly rights and of the authority which it sustained.

During the summer the settlement had awaited the arrival of the Royal Canadian Rifles from York Factory,\* for the Bay route had been chosen for their passage to Red River. In the fall, A. G. B. Bannatyne went north to Norway House to trade at Fish Lake. Bannatyne had left the service of the Company in 1850 to enter the employ of the private trader Andrew McDermot. He had later married one of McDermot's daughters. In going north to trade he was in fact invading the northern forest country which the Company was still trying to hold as

\*Beaver, Autumn 1957.

its own preserve. Chief Factor Barnston, stopped him at Norway House and sent him back to Red River for trial in custody of William Sinclair. This act of itself might well have precipitated another Sayer trial but its effect on public opinion was much increased by the fact that Bannatyne and Sinclair came down Lake Winnipeg in company with the Rifles. Did this mean that the troops were to be used to re-impose the monopoly? A wave of fierce excitement swept along the banks of the two rivers. But Chief Factor William Mactavish, displaying that genius for giving way without surrendering that was to make him an ideal governor for Red River in the next decade, released Bannatyne. What he avoided is indicated by a report in *The Globe* of 12 January 1858 of a meeting held in Ewan Cameron's house on the Assiniboine on December 1st. Resolutions were passed calling for the end of the monopoly, representative government, and union with Canada, and the improvement of postal and other communications with Canada. Among those who spoke was Pierre Guillaume Sayer, who referred to his own trial in 1849, and compared Bannatyne's arrest with his own. Thus the arrest re-awakened Kennedy's agitators, but Mactavish's prompt action quenched the new blaze. So the affair ended, except for a question in the British Parliament inspired by sentiment hostile to the Company. Nothing, of course, could more definitely establish the fact that the troops had been sought, not to re-impose the monopoly on the private traders of Red River, but to restrain the defiance of Company authority which the establishment of an American military base might have caused.

If Bannatyne's arrest ended quietly, the group of annexationists along the Assiniboine who had met it with a demand for union with Canada kept up their agitation. In February they despatched a letter to *The Globe* protesting against a statement of Captain John Palliser's reported in the Records of the Royal Geographical Society that Red River was a curious example of the impossibility of helping people who will do nothing for themselves. This, they protested, was unjust. They would therefore form a committee, to be known as the Assiniboine Committee, to watch the Hudson's Bay question and safeguard the future interests of the country. It is of interest to note that the chairman of this committee was Pierre Falcon<sup>†</sup> of St Francois-Xavier, poet of the Métis, and that with English settlers like Ewan Cameron and John Taylor there were French and Métis like Pierre Portras, Alen Breland and Pierre Guillaume Sayer.

The Committee was true to its first intent; and in June sent a deputation to wait on Simpson with a letter of remonstrance against his evidence before the Select Com-

mittee. They had also forwarded to the Imperial Parliament, through A. K. Isbister, documents from the local Indian chiefs protesting that the Indian title had never been extinguished, and others on the mode of selling land used by the Company. The Committee also welcomed the formation after Kennedy's return to Toronto of the North West Transit Company, and referred favourably to a memorial presented by Bishop Anderson and the Anglican clergy to Simpson on the government of the country, the land question, and the sale of liquor.

The public spirit of the Assiniboine Committee was, however, the last trace of the anti-company and pro-Canadian agitation of 1857-59, with one exception. Early in November 1858, a public meeting chaired by Bishop Anderson resolved to despatch Donald Gunn to survey a road to the Lake of the Woods. This was done, but the cutting of the road was to be delayed until spring. Thus Red River bravely proposed to help itself, although it never did so in this instance, and it was to be ten years before the cutting of the Dawson Road was begun by the Canadian government.

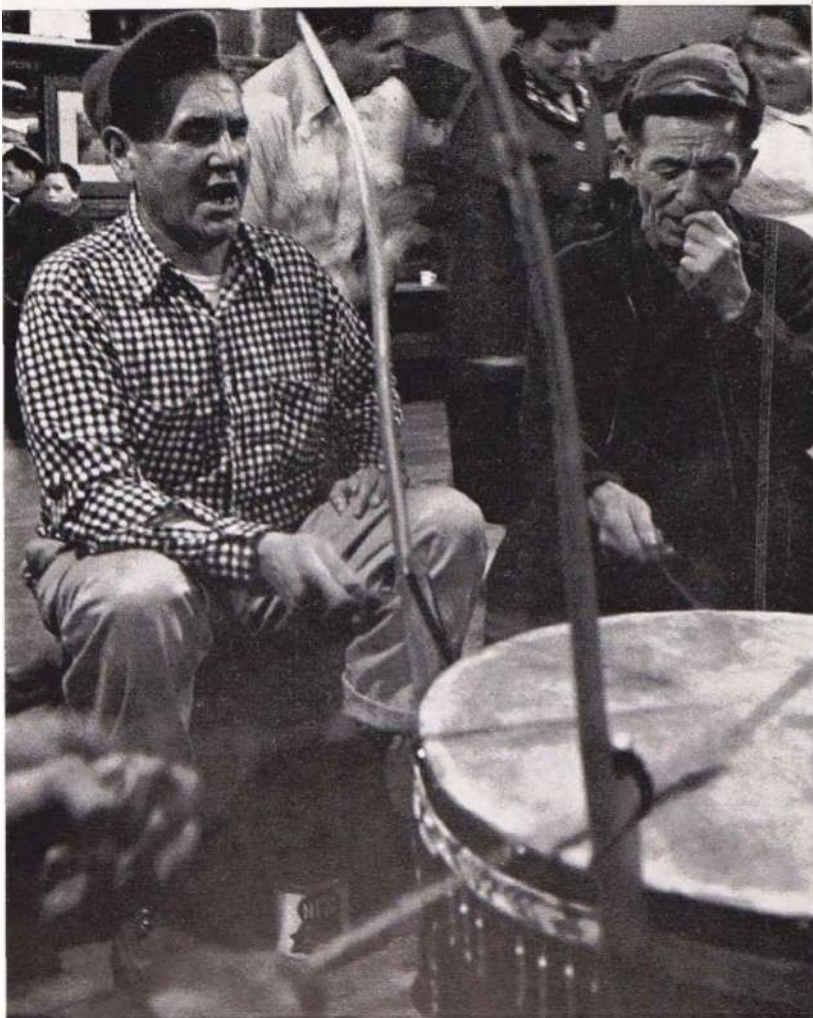
Thus the agitation died down. It died down, it would seem, for two reasons. One was that the great commercial depression of 1857 took the drive out of the Canadian annexation party and also slowed down the eager expansionists of St Paul. But it also died down in Red River because Red River itself was enjoying a little local boom, caused by the exploring parties and the troops, and by the rapid multiplication of the free traders who, a correspondent of *The Globe* noted, had "started up of late in such numbers." The troops had not put down the free trade.

The arrival of the S.S. *Anson Northup* in July 1859, and James Wickes Taylor's visit in August, and the arrival of Henry McKinney of Amherstberg as the first Canadian trader, and of William Buckingham and William Coldwell of Toronto to found the first newspaper, were but after effects of a movement which was rapidly subsiding. Not for a decade were agitation against the Company's monopoly or for union with Canada to be live issues. One half, the French half, of Red River desired no change after 1857. The other half, and the great Company, lived from year to year gripped by a situation which only an external force, Great Britain, Canada, or the United States could end. So the boat tripping and cart tripping, the buffalo hunt and the casual farming of Red River enjoyed a ten years' reprieve from progress. Union with the outside world, which had seemed so imminent in 1857, spared a little longer the unique and picturesque community along the banks of the Red and the Assiniboine. ♦

<sup>†</sup>Beaver, Spring 1956.

# FRIDAY NIGHT DRUM

BY FRED MORGAN



Every Friday night during the long winter months Ojibwas of the Lac Court Oreilles band drive to a deserted logging museum in Hayward, Wisconsin. They leave behind a week of cutting pulp-wood, catching fish, or working on roads. They come to relax and expand. Patiently they wait for singers to fill the stools round the drum that will give them rhythm; there must be voices to make the music, and if they are not satisfied with the singers they will not dance. One begins a song, the others join, as all drum. Once satisfied, the dance will start, and grow, and grow. Round the honest power of the drum, the pulse of creation, the Indians from earliest times had built dancing into a lively and exhilarating art. Now, as these Ojibwas respond to the rhythm and the melodies, the bells on their ankles jingling, the rafters sing and the floorboards rock as the throbbing drum loosens their hearts, their minds, and their bodies.



Their feeling is a reflection of that of Socrates; that the united influence of music and gymnastic will bring into accord the rational principle, which is wise, and has the care of the whole soul, and the passionate or spirited principle, nerving and sustaining the reason with noble words and lessons, and moderating and soothing and civilizing the wildness of passion by harmony and rhythm. Precise timing, which comes naturally, is essential to Indian dancing. As the beat warms up, the sweat of the body cleanses the soul—a clean soul is free to go and the body goes with it as spirits soar. But no matter how carried away a dancer is as he shakes himself loose from the wheel of life, every motion stops the instant the drum stops.

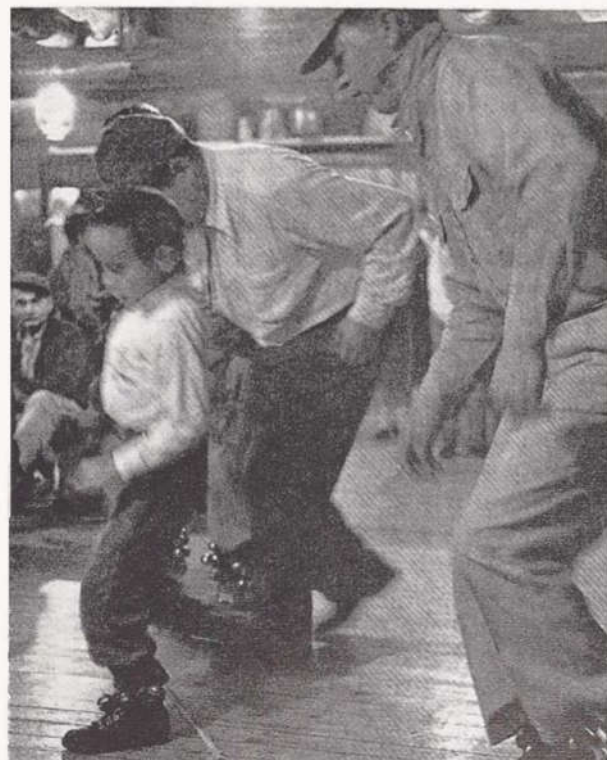
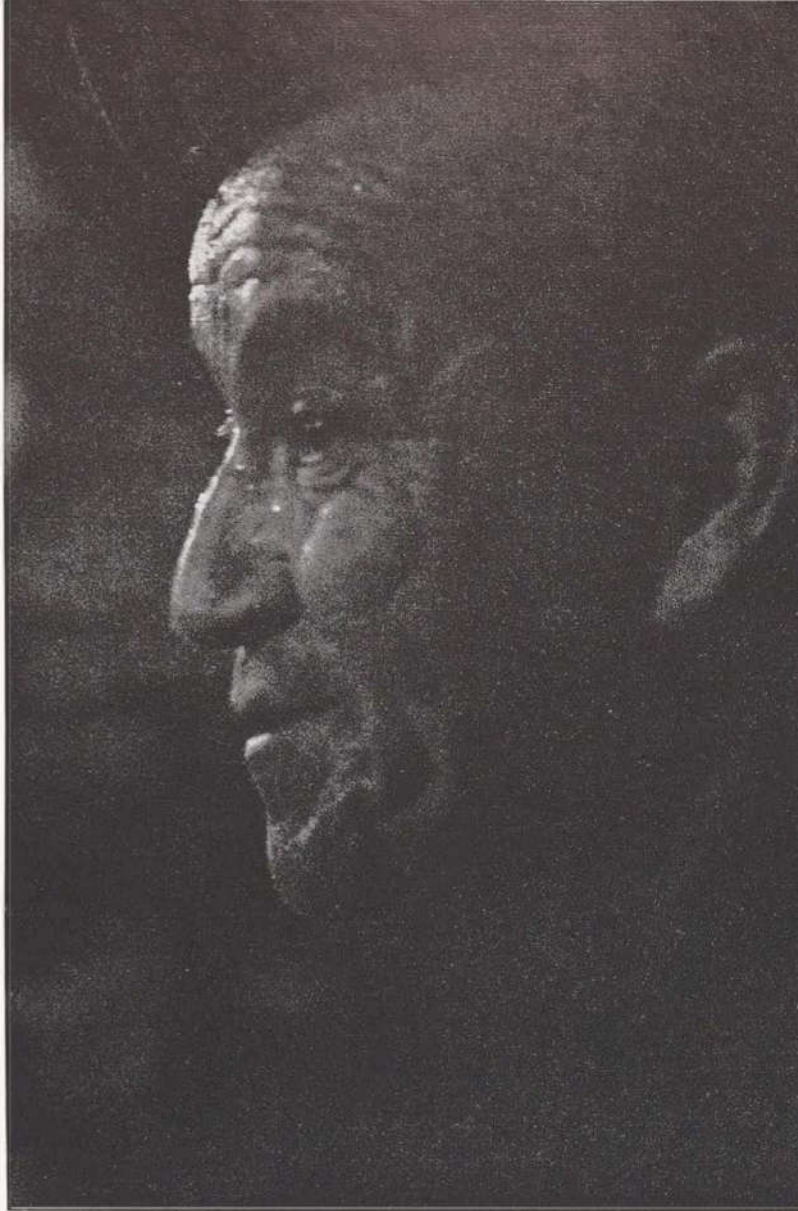
A dance is always a song, and only the dancer circling the drum can plainly hear how closely tied is the melody of the song to the pleasure of the dance. The Ojibwa have fast dances and slow dances, some stately, some abandoned; some are games, others religious. Their happiness finds an outlet in their dancing as all ages join in rhythm that leads to rapture.

Very different from the wild freedom of the war songs is the restrained pace of the women's dances, of which there are hundreds. Variations are made by singers and dancers, but the beat is always recognizable as belonging to a particular category of songs. The corn dance, adopted long ago from another tribe, consists of endless songs, each composed of four rhythms building from slow to very fast. Each bid for freedom from the restraining rhythm of the preceding verse becomes wilder than the last until the footwork in the final break-out is unbelievably swift. As important as the footwork are the body movements. At first just the arms swing with the hands and wrists in unison with the feet; the body bends and straightens from the waist like a corn stalk swaying in the wind. The head begins to nod up and down very fast while it turns, birdlike, from one shoulder to the other. At last every part of the body is in motion and vibrating like a plant in a storm, as it spins, retreats, darts this way and that.

The face of the singer shows the intensity and devotion he puts into his song while, one of the group round the drum, he taps the beat. Always the rhythm must be kept by the dancer and in the fish dance, shown at centre, this has to be combined with a test of gymnastics as participants follow the leader. In the feather dance, the boy must keep his body in time to the drum as he tries to pick up a feather with his teeth. The end of the snake dance, pictured at far right, is symbolic of a legend about crossing a river on a pitching log which, on reaching the shore and looking back, the traveller finds to have been a serpent.

And when the dance is over, there is a feeling of oneness with all creation; the cares of the world have been left, and the face of the dancer expresses ecstatic satisfaction.







# NORTHERN BOOKS

## THE BRITISH SEARCH FOR THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

by Glyndwr Williams

Published for The Royal Commonwealth Society by Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., London. xvi, 306 pages, 35/-

Reviewed by L. H. Neatby

FEW episodes in the unfolding of the Canadian sub-continent have commanded more popular attention or are better understood than the first and last phases of the British search for the Northwest Passage. The former (1576-1632) comprising the discoveries of the great Elizabethans, and a lively postscript furnished by the voyages of Luke Foxe and Thomas James, have all the glamour of that glorious epoch, and provide an attractive field of endeavour to both the research student and the writer of popular history. The latter (1818-1859) has an equally widespread appeal. The discoverers of that era, worthy contemporaries of Livingstone, Burton, and Stanley, were themselves able publicists, and enjoyed all the notoriety which an active popular press, appealing to an enlarged reading public, could bestow. By contrast the two centuries of Anglo-Canadian enterprise which separate the voyage of Thomas James from the emergence of Ross, Parry, and Franklin, though marked by heroic effort and a vast extension of geographical knowledge, have made little impact on the minds of any but professed scholars.

There is good reason for this. The discoverers of the 18th century partook of the sober rationalism of their age, and were wholly lacking in the grandeur of the Elizabethans who preceded and the Victorians who followed them. Their efforts seemed lacking in continuity and coherence; and, apart from Hearne, none of them had a marked gift for narrative. Though Cook and Vancouver rank with the greatest discoverers of any period, their names are not instinctively associated with the search for the Passage.

The late Arthur S. Morton did much to rescue individual Anglo-Canadian explorers of this period from obscurity, to demonstrate the genuine unity of their

history, and to invest their story with human interest. Yet his interpretation, embedded here and there in his massive *History of the Canadian West to 1870-71*, is not readily accessible to the general reader. What was needed was a compact popular monogram dealing exclusively with the quest for the Passage, and linking the discoverers of the 17th with those of the 19th century. It is this which Dr Glyndwr Williams in *The British Search for the Northwest Passage in the Eighteenth Century* provides.

As his title implies the author does not touch on the events of the later 17th century, because in that period the Passage, though probably not forgotten, was thrust into the background. For a generation after the voyage of James, England was fully occupied with civil broils at home; the latter part of the 17th and the first decade of the 18th century were taken up with the organization of the fur trade, and a life-and-death struggle with France which threatened to end in the total expulsion of the English from the shores of Hudson Bay. As soon as they were re-established and their position secured by the Peace of Utrecht the search for the Passage was resumed, and as our author (who begins his history at this point) demonstrates, it was prosecuted with consistent logical endeavour until George Vancouver proved beyond all possibility of contradiction that no Passage existed below the Arctic Circle. James Knight's tragic voyage in 1719 was soon followed by Arthur Dobbs's propaganda campaign for a systematic search; and thence resulted the voyages of discovery in Hudson Bay of Middleton, Moor, and of sundry harassed Company skippers who were expected to combine the functions of the trader with those of the geographical scientist. Their findings with regard to a navigable Passage were judged inconclusive by the theorists at home, but they did prove the difficulties caused by the short open season in the waters of the Bay. Hearne tried to settle the question by a land journey; but his findings also were deemed ambiguous, owing to his obviously exaggerated latitudes. Thereupon the British government, concerned with the strategic uses of a far northern waterway, sent first

Cook, and then Vancouver to search for the western outlet of the Passage in the more easily navigable waters of the upper Pacific. The sequence traced by Dr Williams is logical throughout; the scene of his drama is changed without detriment to its unity. It is gratifying to find an important and not too well known phase of Canadian history presented with such clearness and breadth of understanding.

Industry and thoroughness in research and perfect impartiality are qualities not always joined to the capacity to excite interest, but Dr Williams has combined them. He can be dramatic without being partisan. The reader sympathizes with the luckless Christopher Middleton without condemning the narrow enthusiast Dobbs. It is surprising that with our author's flair for the graphic he fails to quote Parry's superb sarcasm on the balancing "in my own mind the ocular evidence of Captain Middleton against the speculative reasoning of Mr. Dobbs." The influence of contemporary geographical theorists (a class which Cook and Vancouver held in low esteem) on the course of discovery is given its due importance; and the savants themselves are treated with a fairness and good nature which does not wholly exclude liveliness and wit. Dr Williams's summing up of Alexander Dalrymple "whose enthusiastic pertinacity and flashes of insight into geographical problems were marred by a tendency to subordinate facts to theories, and a mulish reluctance to abandon lost causes" has vividness and brevity. His sketches of the last voyage of Cook and the voyage of Vancouver are characteristic—brief and condensed without being superficial. The few pages devoted to Vancouver are particularly good.

Altogether a charmingly compact book which appeals to the ordinary reader while furnishing the student with a useful source of reference.

Dr Neatby, head of the Classics Department at Acadia University, has made a study of Northwest Passage exploration. He is the author of "In Quest of the Northwest Passage" and "The Link Between the Oceans."

## AU PAYS DES PEAUX-DE-LIEVRES

by Fr P. E. Breton, O.M.I.

Editions de l'Ermitage. 9916 - 110th  
Street, Edmonton. \$1.50. 177 pages

Reviewed by Douglas Leechman

WHEN Rudyard Kipling wrote "A School Song" which begins "Let us now praise famous men—Men of little showing" it was schoolmasters that he had in mind, but surely the same thoughts come to us when we contemplate the work and influence of some of the missionaries who have laboured in the Far North of Canada. Many of them are unknown outside their little Missions, unknown to anybody but the Indians, a few white people, and their colleagues in religion.

Such a one was Brother Joseph Marie Patrick Kearney, O.M.I., born in Coal-island, County Tyrone, Ireland, in 1834. Originally he intended becoming a priest but as he progressed in his studies he became convinced that he should not aspire to so sacred a profession and decided instead to become a serving brother. And so he remained till his death in 1918, at the age of eighty-four. He was a short, stocky little Irishman, with a great bushy beard. The Indians called him Déné Ondié, the little chap.

In 1861 Brother Kearney arrived at Fort Good Hope and he never left it again, though they say he did once come "outside" for four days. Fort Good Hope lies on the Mackenzie River, twenty-five miles south of the Arctic Circle or thereabouts, and how far south he got in four days isn't told. His was a long life of service, a full fifty-seven years.

Father P. E. Breton, O.M.I., the author, has already written the biographies of three other missionaries: Brother Kowalczyk, Father Lacombe, and Mgr Vital Grandin. This new book, *Au Pays des Peaux-de-Lievres* describes well the country of the Hare Indians, though he has not very much to say about the Indians themselves. He is concerned rather with the daily life and activities of Brother Kearney, jack of all trades, who did the cooking, the gardening, the wood chopping, the dog driving, the fishing, the tailoring for the whole Mission, day after monotonous day, for years on end, without complaint, without a thought of self pity or of self praise. As a dog driver, he is said to have been among the best ever seen.

Life in the Far North in those early days was hard indeed. The first consideration for the missionaries was that of simple, stark survival. They must provide their own food, their own fuel, their own shelter. Caribou and fish were the staples, especially fish. As one of them said ruefully, they ate fish till it stuck out of their eyes. Another, deathly ill and in bed, wished aloud for just one meal of milk and potatoes, neither of which had he seen for many years. Later on they managed to cultivate a little vegetable garden, and today the gardens at Fort Good Hope are extensive and highly productive.

Then there was shelter to be found. The first building was but a crude log cabin, which they improved as time passed. Then they built a small church, and later a larger one, beautifully decorated with carvings and paintings. Much of the carving was done by Brother Kearney with a jack knife, and his paints were earth colours mixed with fish oil.

Father Breton's account of the death of Father Grollier, who founded the Mission at Fort Good Hope in 1859, is touching indeed. It was suggested that he should be buried on the site where the church was eventually to stand, but he refused this honour and asked to be buried between two Indians who had recently died and were laid in the little cemetery. The death of Brother Kearney is even more moving and is beautifully described.

The whole purpose of the Mission, of course, was work with and for the Indians, their health, their education, their conversion. Baptisms, marriages, and funerals took up much of the time and education even more. Nor were the few white people there, mostly men connected with the Hudson's Bay Company,

neglected. Dr Charles Camsell's father was a frequent visitor to the Mission, as were many others well known in the Far North.

Father Breton has not neglected any field of research that could throw light on the life of this little-known, obscure servant of religion. He has travelled from Fort Good Hope itself to the Vatican with many stops in between. It has been well worth it. His book is a sheer delight. His style is charming, a light and delicate French, twisted with wry humour at times, and with a complete lack of any sanctimonious air. His great love of the North is in strong evidence and quite unaffected. An English translation is to appear soon, but translations seldom come up to the originals. In this case we can only hope that the work will be in competent and sympathetic hands.

Is it too late, I wonder, to correct the scale on the map on page 20? It greatly diminishes the actual distances.

Dr Leechman, retired Canadian Government anthropologist, is the author of several books, including "Native Tribes of Canada"

## VANCOUVER—FROM MILL- TOWN TO METROPOLIS

by Alan Morley

Mitchell Press, Vancouver. 1961.

234 pages, illus. \$5.95

Reviewed by Corday M. Atkinson

HE IS a brave man who will attempt to write the story, or biography, of a city—any city. For the difficulties involved in keeping the narrative readable to an audience wider than the local are enormous. For one thing, there are the

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conflicting currents of pioneers' recollections to be avoided or reconciled, to say nothing of the steadily marching dates and rapidly accumulating important personalities.

That Mr Morley has not been entirely successful in his task may be clearly evident, particularly in the later chapters of his book. Here the very magnitude of the city whose story he set out to tell, of the hundred miraculous years, makes the task almost insuperable.

In his preface Mr Morley acknowledges his book is not a history of the seaport.

"This book is not a history of Vancouver. It is obviously less, and I have tried to make it something more. . . . History does not have the answer; as far as it has rules and a design it requires a larger stage to display its pattern. A city is alive and individual. It demands a biographer. To tell the story of a city one must love and understand it. This is not a science but a mystery and an art. Like loving and understanding a woman, it requires a sensual and emotional receptivity the historian cannot permit himself, and at best only a partial success can be attained."

That the author has attained much more than a partial success is apparent to all readers of his book. The success is due in large measure to his own personal involvement with his subject, for he is a native son of Canada's great western seaport, and a passionately devoted son at that. It is also due in lesser degree to Mr Morley's considerable skill as a journalist. If there is no complete triumph to be found here the blame lies with the subject matter. Even a hundred years can produce an infinity of material where a city is concerned.

Amongst the finest chapters of the book is the one entitled "Timber-r-r-r." No perceptive visitor or local resident could ever have driven around the rock-bound bluffs of Stanley Park without realizing the all-important role the forest has played in the life of the seaport. It was the primal cause of its birth on the triangular peninsula formed by the converging waters of Burrard Inlet, English Bay and the Fraser River.

"When the song of Vancouver is written its theme will be the shriek of the giant saws biting into timber, the clang and thud of the sawyer's 'nigger' tossing huge logs like jackstraws, the clatter and twang of timber planks on the sorting chains."

Running through the earlier chapters of the book are interwoven threads of the story of the province, British Columbia, which evolved from the colonies of Vancouver's Island and the Mainland. To Vancouver enthusiasts it must be gratifying to read of the young city's lusty and independent commercial growth, which very early made it possible for the Burrard Inlet pioneers to "cock a snook" at the social, governmental clique of old families in both Victoria and New Westminster. The only revenge the two capitals could wreak on the healthy upstart was to regard it as at best a holiday resort for well-to-do Royal City dwellers, or at worst as a "conglomeration of filth . . . a lusty, brawling little community singularly ungrateful to the unamused mother city on the Fraser."

But nothing could stop the growth of the unwelcome community—not even the Great Fire of 1886. From Hastings Hill to Gastown, to Granville, to Vancouver the boom continued, accelerated beyond belief by the very holocaust which was supposed to have destroyed the Burrard Inlet settlement. In tracing the drama of that growth and the lives of the giants who were largely responsible for it, Mr Morley pays full tribute to those pioneers.

"To appreciate their work" he points out, "it is necessary to remember what both citizens and strangers often forget; Vancouver is the work of one human lifetime. There are men alive today in the city who were born before any white man felled a tree, built a cabin or hewed a trail anywhere between Point Grey and Coquitlam, Howe Sound and the Fraser River."

Though later chapters of *Vancouver: from Milltown to Metropolis* are rather heavily weighted with records, statistics, names and events, Mr Morley's vigorous prose make even these very readable, particularly so to residents who lived through any of the years here recorded. Recent events are analysed with insight and imagination, and take their place in the wider annals of world events. Many will read and say "Yes, that is how it happened" and continue to read, nostalgically, as the past is recreated and characters long-dead spring to life.

Scattered through the book are innumerable character vignettes, from the giants of the first years to later, public spirited men of the metropolis.

Too solidly packed, perhaps, with names, events (both social and political),

and movements for the casual reader, this story of Vancouver should be an inspirational source book for students pursuing a more detailed theme on one or more of its aspects. The author gives full credit to Major James S. Matthews, Vancouver's famous archivist, from whose files much of the material for the book has been drawn.

Numerous excellent photographs provide visual proof of the city's fabulous century of growth.

*Corday Mackay Atkinson is a frequent contributor to western historical journals*

## WILDERNESS COOKERY

by Bradford Angier

Stackpole, Harrisburg, Pa.; Ambassador Books Limited, Toronto. 256 pages, illus. \$4.95

AROSE by any other name may smell as sweet but it might be that kelp by another name would taste sweeter. We always have our doubts about how far writers on live-off-the-country foods have experimented with them, and when we saw a recommendation for giant kelp in Mr Angier's latest book we were sceptical. However, an opportunity for sampling this whip-like seaweed offered—and we sampled. The result was satisfactory and Mr Angier is vindicated. Nevertheless, we were surprised at some of the suggested edibles, such as bulrush, freshwater crayfish, lynx, and crow.

There is much more to the pocket-size book than this. A provisioning table, complete with calory values, will help the novice in making up a grubstake, and there is guidance on equipment and on how to pack, and even for the chore of dish-washing. As to the campfire—it was nice of the author to confirm that the smoke actually does follow you round the fire (filling the partial vacuum made by a nearby object) and to offer a solution to this nuisance.

Methods of cooking are discussed and there is instruction on preparing game and fish. The main part of the book consists of recipes, with a chapter on breads and sourdough, and there are suggestions for substitute ingredients that might come in handy, such as hardwood ashes for baking soda, and snow for eggs.

There should be dishes here to please every taste.—MB



Leonard Lee Rue III

*Amanita muscaria*, a beautiful but poisonous fungus found in open woods in late summer and fall. The cap is at first yellow, deepening as it opens out to orange and then red, flecked with white patches.



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